

MAY 5, 1922

No. 866

7 Cents

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

TOM THE BANK MESSENGER OR THE BOY (A WALL STREET STORY) WHO GOT RICH

AND OTHER STORIES

By A Successful Man



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Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 163 West 22d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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NEW YORK, MAY 5, 1922

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Tom the Bank Messenger

OR, THE BOY WHO GOT RICH

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Tom Lanston.

"Tom," said Sadie Lanston to her brother, one evening at the supper table, "you are well acquainted among brokers and others who have offices in Wall Street, aren't you?"

"Sure I am," answered Tom Lanston. "I stand well with a bunch of people who are customers at our bank. Why do you ask?"

"I want you to try and get Daisy Darling a position as stenographer in some good office."

"Why, she told me the business school she attended for some months placed her with a stock-broker named Mudge, who has a small office in the Carter Building on Wall street. Is she going to leave him?"

"She has left him. She quit this afternoon."

"What! In the middle of the week?"

"Yes."

"What was the trouble?"

"She had good reasons."

"Was the work too hard?"

"No, that wasn't the trouble. The fact is, her employer wasn't satisfactory."

"No? Is he a crank?"

"He is, I dare say, but that isn't what Daisy found fault with. The truth is, Mr. Mudge wants a wife as much as he does a stenographer. He fancied that Daisy would just fill the bill to his satisfaction, so he began pestering her with his attentions whenever she had an idle moment. He brought her in flowers and candy in the morning when he came to the office, and tried every way to win her over. When she asked him to please desist, as she came there for business and not to be paid attention to, he laughed and told her she didn't seem to realize what a good thing she was letting get by her. A good thing! Just think of that. Why, he's old enough, she told me, to be almost her grandfather! He must be a conceited old fool."

"Well, I don't blame her for shaking him after such conduct on his part," said Tom. "She's too young, and too nice, to throw herself away on an old man, even if he has plenty of money. Some girls wouldn't mind, though, if they thought there was enough in it. Girls of that kind will marry any old thing to get their fingers on his bank account. I heard one girl say she'd rather be an old man's darling than a young man's slave. She was the stenographer of our bank when I went to work there. We were pretty chummy till she left to get married."

"Did she marry an old man for his money?"

"She did not. She married a young clerk for love, and has been living on his eighteen per and expectations ever since, and has had a pretty rocky time of it making ends meet, so I've heard," laughed Tom.

"Well, I wish you'd see what you can do for Daisy. She and her mother haven't any too much to live on. She must get another position right away. She is willing to take anything that will pay. She says she'll go as cashier in a grocery store or butcher shop until she can secure another stenographer's place."

"I'll run around to her flat and tell her I will make a big effort to get her a good place. She's a nice little girl and I'd do a lot for her," said Tom.

"I thought you would," smiled Sadie. "I told her she could depend on you doing your best."

"I'm glad to see you take an interest in her."

"She's a dear, sweet girl. She isn't seventeen yet, and the idea of that old Mudge making love to her is too ridiculous for anything. There's no fool like an old one. She told me that he looks all of sixty-five."

"I've seen him. He's a regular ancient masher. He dresses like a young man. Always has a boutonniere in his coat, and is spruced up to beat the band. I didn't think he'd make love to a girl as young as Daisy. He's had several stenographers, I know, but none of them were under twenty, and the one who stayed the longest with him was thirty-five, or at least looked that old," said Tom, putting on his hat.

Tom Lanston was a banker's messenger in Wall Street. His employer, John Foster, ran a private bank on the corner of Nassau street. It was known as Foster's Bank, and enjoyed the confidence of a large number of depositors, who were mostly brokers. The bank had been in operation for all of thirty years, at different locations in the financial district, and had weathered more than one crisis in finance during that time.

The bigger banks had tried to get Foster's best customers away from him from time to time, by bombarding them continuously with circulars and statements showing their greater substantiality, but they didn't succeed to any great extent. Foster was known to be wealthy and one of the squarest men in the financial circles, and possessed the qualification of making friends and keeping them. The capital of Foster's Bank was only \$500,000, but he could count on a five-mil-

lion backing in an emergency. Most of the other banks claimed a capital and surplus of from five to fifteen millions, and his business alongside theirs made him look like a piker; but his depositors had learned that their money was just as safe in his bank as it would be in the others, and there were some who thought it even safer. Tom had been Foster's confidential messenger for three years, and had proved thoroughly trustworthy and capable. His wages were \$10 a week, plus extras. The extras sometimes came in the shape of tips, but mostly represented presents of small sums frequently handed him by his employer to make up an average of \$15 a week, or about what the ordinary clerks received. The fact was Foster found Tom so useful in his capacity as messenger that he did not want to put him at a desk regularly, but was willing to pay him in a round-about way as much as he would have earned as a clerk.

Tom, his sister and their mother lived in a moderate priced flat in Harlem. Rent was cheaper at the time of which we write than it is now. The same flat to-day would cost more than double what Mrs. Lanston paid for it. And we may incidentally remark that living was a whole lot cheaper in those days, too. Tom's \$15 was as good as \$40 now. Tom's sister earned \$12 as a stenographer in a Broadway importing house, and she was required to do some bookkeeping also.

Our young messenger turned in \$8 of his regular pay every week, and kept the \$2 for expenses. The extra money he saved and bought his own clothes and other things with it. He even bought many things for his mother and sister. He also saved enough to buy 10 shares of a certain stock on the quiet one day a year before our story opens. He made the deal through a little banking and brokerage house on Nassau street, near Wall, that was looked upon by brokers as a bucket shop, though it wasn't so in reality, notwithstanding that some of its methods savored of the bucket shop.

Tom put up \$100 as marginal security, and the deal turned out successful. When the bank settled with him he found himself worth \$250. After that he went into other deals from time to time, taking care not to let Mr. Foster know what he was about. Sometimes he won and sometimes he was out and injured; but at the time our story opens he had \$1,500 stowed away in a safe deposit box, and his mother or his sister did not know anything about the existence of that sum. Had he dropped dead suddenly he had it fixed so that the news would have reached them as a surprise from the safe deposit company.

As his heart was sound and he always felt healthy, he didn't figure on dropping dead. What he was always figuring on was getting rich through speculating in Wall Street stocks. Lots of people have figured the same way, and their anticipations have met, in the majority of instances, with a rude jolt. Whether Tom was destined to get his, this story will duly set forth. Privately, Tom thought a great deal of Daisy Darling, and he was glad of any old excuse to go over and visit her. Leaving his mother and sister still at the table talking, he started out.

Daisy and her mother lived in three rooms four blocks away, and it took Tom about ten minutes to get there. Mrs. Darling did dressmaking to

help out the family resources, and she sometimes put in evenings on her work when she was behind. When Tom walked upstairs he found Daisy looking down over the banisters to see who the visitor was.

"Oh, it's you, Tom?" she said.

She called him Tom and he called her Daisy, and they were quite chummy.

"Yes. I thought I'd drop in and see you," he said.

"I'm glad you did. Come in and see mother."

He followed her in and shook hands with Mrs. Darling, who was always glad to see him, because he had such a taking way about him.

"I heard from my sister that you have left Broker Mudge," said Tom to Daisy.

"Yes. Did she tell you why I left him?"

"Yes, and I think you did perfectly right. Don't you, Mrs. Darling?"

"Most assuredly. I am surprised that an old gentleman like him, in such a respectable business, should so far forget himself. Why, he's old enough to be Daisy's father!"

"Grandfather, you mean, brother. He's older than he looks. I wouldn't be surprised if he is seventy. Why, the very first day I went to work for him he began to be attentive. I thought at first it was his fatherly way, and paid little attention, but he soon showed that his intentions were serious, and I was forced to ask him to behave. He stopped for a while, but began his foolishness again. I couldn't stand it, so I told him I was going to leave. He tried every way to prevent me, but when he found I was determined, he paid me a full week's wages, though I had worked but three days this week, which was the second, and sent to the school for another girl," said Daisy.

"The boys of the Street call him the old dude, and make lots of fun of him among themselves," said Tom. "I didn't think he was so bad as they represented him, but your experience convinces me that they didn't say any more about him than he deserves. Well, Sadie asked me to interest myself in looking up a new job for you, and I came around to tell you that I will do my best."

"You are awfully kind, Tom," said Daisy gratefully.

"Don't mention it. You ought to know that I'm willing to do anything for you. I know quite a number of brokers, and I'll speak to Mr. Foster about you. He thinks a lot of me and I wouldn't be surprised but he would be able to get you a position in a short time if I ask him to do so as a favor to me," said Tom.

"I hate to trouble you, Tom."

"Booh! It's no trouble. Just keep up your spirits and don't accept any cheap job in a grocery store or butcher shop, as you told Sadie you'd be willing to do, and I'll fix you up all right."

Tom was as good as his word. He spoke to Banker Foster about Daisy next morning, and two days later the girl had a new position with a broker in the same building as the bank, at \$10 to start with, and the promise of an early raise if she proved satisfactory.

CHAPTER II.—In Danger of His Life.

"Tom," said Banker Foster, one morning, a week or two later, "run up to Mr. Seymour and

see if he wants to renew that note of his. I think he has forgotten all about it and I don't like to send him one of our usual notices."

Seymour was the broker who had given Daisy employment on Mr. Foster's recommendation, and he was a very nice man. He treated the little girl with kindly courtesy, and she liked him very much indeed. She had made a few mistakes the first week, due to overanxiety to please, and on Saturday morning she was so fearful she was going to be discharged that she got rattled in taking down dictation, and made an awful blunder.

When Seymour called her in and showed it to her and asked her to write a fresh letter she broke down and burst into tears. The broker, seeming to understand the case, talked reassuringly to her, and told her he was not thinking of letting her go. Mr. Foster had recommended her to him and he felt sure she would make good. Daisy felt so grateful to him that when she saw Tom she couldn't say nice enough things about the gentleman, and Tom declared he was a real brick.

Tom went upstairs and, entering Seymour's office, asked for him. He addressed his inquiry to a tall, athletic-looking clerk, whose dark features wore a scowl at that moment.

"He isn't in," said the clerk shortly.

"When do you think he will be in?"

"Don't know," and the clerk passed on.

Tom peered into the counting room through the brass fence and saw Daisy busy at work in a far corner. He asked the cashier if he could step in and see her a moment. He received permission to do so. Daisy was glad to see him, and they had a short talk together. As he was going out, Broker Seymour came in and Tom gave him his message.

"Tell Mr. Foster I'll be down in a few minutes," said the broker.

Tom took the message to his boss. That noon Tom met Daisy again. She was going out to lunch and he was returning from an errand. He stopped to talk with her and learned that matters were not as happy with her as he supposed in her new place. The trouble was not with her employer this time, for she declared that Mr. Seymour was a perfect gentleman, but with the chief clerk, the tall, dark-featured man that Tom had encountered that morning. He had become smitten with Daisy and he made no secret of it to her. He bothered her at her table with his attentions, and Daisy declared to Tom that his conduct was exceedingly distasteful to her.

"Report him to the boss," said the boy.

"I don't like to do so."

"You're not obliged to stand for a clerk's nonsense."

"I—oh!"

Daisy broke off abruptly and started for the door. One of the elevators had just dumped a bunch of passengers out, and among them was the tall, dark-featured clerk. The girl saw him coming and had made a break to escape encountering him. Her escape was blocked at the door for a moment by a number of men entering the building, and that enabled the clerk to catch up with her.

"Ah! there, Miss Darling!" he said. "Will you do me the honor to come and lunch with me?"

"No, sir; I never eat with gentlemen," she said, trying to go on, but he detained her.

"Make an exception in my favor this time."

"Please let me go, sir," she said.

"Why so coy? I'll treat you right."

"Kindly let the young lady alone," said Tom, interfering.

"What's that? Who are you talking to, you young monkey?" cried the clerk angrily.

"I'm talking to you," replied Tom sturdily. "This young lady is a friend of mine, and I won't have her annoyed."

With a howl of wrath the man aimed a sudden blow at the boy. Tom dodged it, and the clerk's fist landed on a fat broker who was entering the building. The angry trader retaliated with a blow on the clerk's chest. During the angry talk that followed Tom and Daisy got away and the clerk went to lunch, breathing vengeance on the boy, whom he recognized as the messenger of the Foster Bank. Tom usually got off at four, but on that day he was sent on an errand over to a certain Brooklyn storage warehouse with directions to bring back an answer. It was a quarter of five when he got back and delivered the reply to the office. As it was about the time Daisy went home Tom went up to her office to offer her his escort uptown. When he entered Seymour's office the first person he encountered was the dark-featured clerk.

"Get out of here, you young jackanapes!" roared the clerk, on seeing him.

"Are you addressing me?" asked Tom chipperly.

"Yes, I'm addressing you. Get out, d'ye hear?"

"Are you the boss?" asked Tom sarcastically.

With a roar of anger the clerk grabbed Tom and rushed him out into the corridor. The incident attracted general attention in the office, and the clerk, whose name was Babbitt, was regarded as dangerous when aroused, the two bookkeepers who were getting ready to go home ran out to save the boy from a possible pounding. Daisy, who had seen the trouble, darted out ahead of them to interfere in Tom's behalf.

"Now get downstairs, or I'll throw you down!" roared Babbitt, giving the boy a shove that almost threw him on the floor.

"You big bully, who do you think you are, anyway?" said the now thoroughly angry messenger.

With a snort, Babbitt reached for him. Tom jumped to one side and then, quick as a wink, he punched the man in the body.

"I'll fix you for that!" cried Babbitt, with an imprecation, jumping at the boy.

The furious clerk seized Tom and swung him clear over the railing, apparently intending to throw him down through the opening between the stairs. The boy uttered a cry for help. Daisy, with a scream, rushed forward to try and save him. Tom's life hung on a thread, when the two bookkeepers, realizing the seriousness of the situation, sprang upon the clerk and pushed him and his victim back. In the mix-up Tom got free, while the bookkeepers had their hands full holding the enraged Babbitt. The rest of Seymour's clerks came out into the corridor, and they were joined by clerks from the neighboring offices who were attracted by the disturbance.

"I came after you, Daisy. Get your hat and

"we'll go home," said Tom to the little stenographer.

"Oh, Tom, I'm so frightened!" she said, clinging to him.

"Oh, he won't get the chance to touch me any more. To-morrow I'll report him to Mr. Seymour. The idea of a great big coward like him trying to murder me! Great Scott! I thought I was done for when I hung over that railing," said Tom.

Babbitt heard his words, and he struggled harder to shake off the two bookkeepers and go for Tom again.

"You'll report me, will you? I'll kill you, if you do!" he hissed.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of you, though you are strong enough to do me up," retorted the boy. "If I chose to have you arrested for murderous assault I have several witnesses here to make a case against you, and you'd spend some time in a cell at the Tombs."

Daisy, who had gone into the office for her hat, now returned with it on, and Tom led her over to the elevator. A cage stopped at the floor for them and took them down. As soon as the boy was out of sight Babbitt cooled down and was released by the bookkeepers. The discussion as to the cause of the trouble still went on, but no one could learn what had started the row between the chief clerk and the bank messenger. Babbitt finally volunteered the information that the messenger had insulted him in the main corridor that day when he was going to lunch and he intended to get square with him yet.

"I think you've done enough to him, Babbitt," said one of the bookkeepers. "You are too violent when you get mad and lose command of yourself. If you don't put the brake on you are liable to commit some act you'll regret for the rest of your life. I don't know whether you really intended, for the moment, to drop that boy down between the stairs, but had you done so, you'd have killed him, and then you'd have had to face a charge of murder."

Babbitt said nothing, but he probably realized that his passion had carried him too far. In the meanwhile Tom and Daisy took an elevated train at Hanover Square for One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, and both were silent and thoughtful over the incident that had happily ended without serious results. Next morning's papers were full of the prospect of a boom in A. & D. Indeed, for a week or two past the financial journals had hinted at a probable rise in the stock, though no definite reason was given for the suggestion. Tom studied the matter over, and finally decided to get in on 100 shares and chance it.

Sixty shares of a stock had been his biggest venture heretofore. He had invested on that number in his last deal and had done pretty well. He was ambitious to try his luck on 100 shares, since a successful speculation would mean more profit to him. It was the lowest order that a regular broker would accept, and required the marginal backing of \$1,000. Tom, however, intended to stick by the little bank for more than one reason.

His position as messenger for Foster's Bank made it advisable for him to approach a broker in the guise of a speculator. The matter was almost certain to be reported, directly or indi-

rectly, to his employer, and that would lead to an interview on the subject between him and Mr. Foster. While the banker would probably not pull him over the coals very hard, still he would insist that he cut out such side issues in the future, and that would put a stop to his dreams of getting rich right away. The little bank was good enough for him, anyway, and so to the little bank Tom went that day and made his deal.

As soon as Mr. Foster came to the bank Tom went in and told him about his run-in with Babbitt. The matter looked so serious that the banker told him to go up and speak to Mr. Seymour about it. Tom did so at once and the broker expressed his concern. He sent for Daisy, and she declared with some vehemence that but for the aid of the two bookkeepers Tom would have been killed. The two bookkeepers were summoned one by one and reluctantly confirmed the stenographer's statement. Then Babbitt was called in. He declared that he was sorry for what had happened. That he had acted on an angry impulse, and only intended to frighten the boy.

"What cause did the young man give you for you to act in such a way?" asked the broker.

"He insulted me in the corridor downstairs at noon yesterday," said Babbitt.

Tom told why he had interfered with the chief clerk, and asked Mr. Seymour to question Daisy on the subject. The girl backed Tom up and stated that Babbitt had repeatedly pressed his undesirable attentions upon her on previous occasions, and she had complained about it to Tom, who was a particular friend of hers. Babbitt denied her allegations in every point, and insisted that she was laboring under a hallucination.

"The testimony appears to be heavily against you on all counts, Babbitt," said Mr. Seymour. "Return to your desk and don't let me hear anything more on the subject. You can consider yourself fortunate that this boy shows no disposition to proceed against you criminally for your action of yesterday afternoon. Were he to do so, it would place you in a very difficult position, and possibly lead to a prison sentence for you."

Babbitt retired with a scowl on his face, and the matter ended there, as far as Tom and the broker were concerned; but the chief clerk privately swore that he would have revenge on the young messenger, and also on Daisy, for the showing up he was subjected to.

CHAPTER III.—The Nice Old Gentleman.

Tom kept sharp lookout on the deal he was interested in, though he did not let his private business interfere in any way with his messenger duties, or any other business he was called upon to attend. He was very conscientious in this respect, for he believed in being loyal to his employer, first, last and all the time. It is true that he really had no right to speculate while working for the bank, but he overlooked that point in his eagerness to gratify the ambition of his young life. He saw money on all sides of him in Wall Street. The brokers and financiers were apparently making it hand over fist.

The scale of living was rising. Organized workmen were demanding more pay and shorter

lours. Capital was combining to reduce expenses and increase prices. No matter what newspaper or magazine he picked up he was bound to find something that indicated that to-day was the Age of Money. Money was becoming more of a necessity than ever, and the outlook showed that it was growing more and more of a necessity every day, so Tom, who was building on the trend of the times, determined he would not be lost in the shuffle.

The little bank bought the 100 shares of A. & D. at 85, and so notified Tom. Two days later the ticker announced that it was up to 86 1-2. Next day, which was Saturday, it went to 87, and closed at that figure. During the following week it continued to rise, and was up to 91 on Thursday. The public had caught the craze over the stock by that time, and business in all the brokerage houses was humming. That made more business for the banks, and as Foster's Bank enjoyed the custom of a great many old reliable brokers, it participated in the rush.

The brokers needed more ready money to carry on their increasing business, and Foster was called upon for many loans by his depositors, who put up first-class security in return for it. Friday morning broke cold and gloomy over the city. There were flurries of snow in the air, and the Curb brokers, when they gathered for business in the Street, found it advisable to keep on the move. When the Stock Exchange opened up at ten, an effort was made to bear A. & D. The price fell a point and a half, and many nervous speculators sold out, thinking the break had come. They were mistaken. The contrary was the case. It was the boom that was on the tapis.

Whether the temporary break had been engineered by the syndicate behind the stock to shake out what could be got at no one could say for certain, but such things have been known as a part of boom programmes, and they invariably produce the results aimed at. Tom was not frightened into selling, because for one reason he was too busy to keep track of his deal that morning. The drop was over and the price was recovering when he found out that there had been a slump in his stock. At eleven the rise became steady and pronounced and Wall Street was full of excited speculators. At half-past eleven A. & D. was going at 95, and Tom had doubled his investment of \$1,000. The stock fluctuated up to noon, advancing very little, and then jumped to par with a rush. The excitement in the Exchange was tremendous, for all stocks were more or less favorably affected by the rise in A. & D., and everybody seemed to be a buyer. Of course there were sellers, otherwise there would have been nothing to buy, but the selling was mighty light in A. & D., and that fact boosted the price.

An advance on the market had to be offered in every case to induce a holder to part with his shares. At one o'clock when Tom got the chance to run out to his quick-lunch house, A. & D. was going strong at 105.

"Great Scott, I'm \$2,000 to the good. I never expected any such luck as that. I think I ought to sell and make sure of the good thing in sight," thought the young messenger.

When he had eaten his lunch he ran into the Exchange messengers' entrance and looked at the big blackboard. A. & D. was up another point,

and the board room was a seething maelstrom of action and uproar. Tom ran up to the little bank determined to sell, but when he saw the long line stretching away from the margin clerk's window he gave it up. It would take at least twenty minutes for him to reach the window, and what excuse could he offer at the bank for staying away so long?

He went back to his duties, praying that he might not be caught in a slump. At three o'clock A. & D. closed at 110, an advance of 10 points that day. At a quarter of four Tom got excused from further work and made a hasty visit to the little bank to get in the line before the doors closed at four. The line was not so great as before by one-half and in ten minutes Tom reached the window and ordered his shares sold at the opening price in the morning. Then he went home satisfied that he would add considerably to his little capital. The opening price next morning was 111 3-8, and at that figure Tom's 100 shares went like hot cakes. The mystery of this game of speculation is that people can be found to buy at high figures, when the common-sense rule of trade in general is to buy low and sell high.

Stocks, however, are not the only things people will pay high prices for in boom times. Lots of people won't buy real estate until it gets a boom on. That's a good idea if they will buy as soon as the boom sets in. Thousands, however, hold off too long, then pay top prices, and then wonder why the moment of profit has passed. No boom can go on forever. It is the wise man who takes it on the fly. Tom realized on his opportunity at the proper moment. The result was he collared a profit of \$2,600, and raised his financial status to \$4,000 odd. There was more luck than anything else in his success. Where he showed his judgment was in getting in on a speculation that promised to land him a winner.

When the bank settled with him he slapped his bunch of bank notes into his safe deposit box and kissed his fingers to them.

"Next to mother, sis and Daisy, they're the best friends I have," he said. "I'll see you later," he added to them, "when I'm ready to set you to work again."

On the following Saturday about noon Tom was sitting in his chair in the cashier's box-like room when his buzzer went off and he knew that the boss wanted him.

"Tom," said the banker, "I am sorry to have to interfere with any arrangements you may have made for this afternoon, but I have a special errand for you to execute."

"I have made no arrangements for the afternoon, sir, and if I had they wouldn't count for a moment with me where your interests are concerned," said the young messenger cheerfully.

"I know it, Tom, and I appreciate the interest you show toward the bank. You will not suffer by reason of any extra service you are called upon to perform. Perhaps you think that by this time you are entitled to promotion to a desk and higher wages. You deserve it, but where shall I find another messenger as you to take your place?"

"The woods are full of good messengers."

"Admitting that as a fact, the people who have the good ones hold on to them. You may have

observed that bank messengers hold down their jobs longer than other kinds of messengers. Some have been known to grow gray in the service of a particular bank. The reason is because a bank can't afford to change messengers as often as brokers. A trusted messenger is worth his weight in gold, so to speak. It is more advisable to advance his salary regularly than to advance him. Now maybe you understand why I'd rather have you as a messenger than a clerk, even at double the wages.

"I can secure a competent bank clerk any time, but to replace you, Tom, is not so easy. You have many admirable points aside from what the bank requires of you. We pull so well together that I trust our present relationship may continue for some time to come. But I am forgetting the business in hand. Here is a package of bonds I wish you to carry to the party whose name and address is written outside. There is nothing to indicate the value of the package, but I will tell you that it contains industrial negotiable securities to the value of about \$10,000. The usual receipt is inside. The gentleman will sign that for you, and you will hand it to the cashier on Monday morning. Here is a \$5 bill for yourself and \$3 to cover your expenses."

"Thank you, sir. I will start at once," said the boy.

"You will have time to get some lunch and catch the train which leaves Jersey City at 1.15. You will go by the New Jersey Central. You should reach home in time for supper."

Tom received his pay envelope from the cashier and left the bank with the valuable package in the inside pocket of his jacket. Over that he wore his overcoat. It was a dull, cold afternoon, and seemed likely to remain that way. After getting his lunch, Tom made for the Cortlandt street ferry, crossed the river and entered the station. It was a local train he had to take, for Deerfield, the place he was bound for, could only be classed as a small town. The train announcer was already calling out the places the next train would stop at, and Deerfield was one of them. Tom had bought his ticket on the New York side of the river, so all he had to do was to pass into the train shed and take the train on track 5.

He boarded the last car and helped himself to a seat. Just as the train started an old white-haired man entered the car, passed slowly down the aisle, looked sharply at the young messenger, and after surveying the rest of the people in the coach, sat down beside the boy. The train started and slipped out along the suburbs of Jersey City. Tom looked out of the window at the wintry aspect of the landscape, though there was no snow on the ground. The trees that in summer were covered with leaves were now bare and lifeless. The fields looked bleak and cheerless, and the meadows dull and bereft of even the suspicion of grass.

There was really nothing to amuse the eye, and Tom grew tired of the outlook after a while. Presently the old man turned and spoke to him.

"Are you going far, young man?" he said.

Tom did not believe in giving out information to strangers, particularly when he was on messenger service, but this party looked harmless to him, and the boy had a great respect for age.

"I'm going to Deerfield," he replied.

"Deerfield," repeated the old man, "that's quite a distance down the road. I am bound there myself."

"Are you?" said Tom, a bit interested. "Do you live there?"

"No. I am paying a visit to my married daughter."

"Have you been there before?"

"Quite a number of times."

"Then you can tell me what the place looks like."

"You have never been there?"

"No."

"Are you visiting some relative, too?"

"No, I am going there on business."

"Are you a drummer, or something of that kind?"

"No. I'm a Wall Street bank messenger."

As soon as he spoke, Tom regretted having been so confidential. It was the old man's mild and inoffensive aspect which had made him forget himself. Well, it didn't matter," he thought.

"Are you going to call at the Deerfield Bank?"

"No. I have no business with that institution. I am just going on a business call to one of our customers."

"I see," said the old gentleman, in a soft tone. "Taking him down some money, perhaps?"

"No!" replied Tom, a bit abruptly.

The old man showed no further curiosity as to the object of his journey, but at intervals his bright eyes furtively scanned the floor at the boy's feet, and then ran over Tom's person. He asked Tom questions bearing on Wall Street—how long he had been working for the bank, what his general duties were, and other things. He said he lived in Jersey City, and seldom went to New York, and could not recall when he had been in the Wall Street neighborhood. He knew that Wall Street was the money center and that stock brokers operated there. He had never been in any kind of business himself, and the only kind of bank he had dealings with was a savings bank.

He went on to say that he had been careful to save enough to buy a house, which he rented out, and lived on the rent and the interest on some additional money he had in two banks. His attitude was childlike and bland, he seemed to be well informed, and Tom found time passed pleasantly in his company. At last the brakeman announced that the next stopping place was Deerfield.

"That's where we get off," said the old gentleman, pleasantly. "I shall soon see my little grandchildren again. They're expecting me, and they know I never come down without bringing them something. See what I have brought one of them."

He took out of his pocket a peculiarly shaped little box. It had two holes which the nice old gentleman said were there so one could look into it and see the quaint pictures, and an indentation for the nose.

"Take a look," he said. "It is astonishing what odd things are gotten up to amuse children."

He held the box up to Tom's eyes. The young messenger looked into it, but could see nothing.

"I can't see any——"

As he spoke the old gentleman pressed a spring and a fine spray flew up the boy's nose. His senses reeled and he fell back unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.—An Acrobatic Stunt.

"Plympton next!" shouted the brakeman.

Tom sat around like a person suddenly aroused from a deep sleep. The train was getting up headway. The boy noticed that the nice old gentleman was gone from the seat beside him. Then he noticed that his overcoat was unbuttoned and his jacket also. He instinctively thrust his hand into his inner pocket and to his consternation discovered that the package of bonds was missing.

"Great Scott! have I been robbed?" he gasped, aghast at the bare idea of such a thing.

Then he sprang on his feet and made for the rear door of the car, a few feet away, where the brakeman was standing.

"When do we reach Deerfield?" he asked.

"Deerfield! We just stopped there. Next station is Plympton, ten miles," replied the man.

"My gracious! I had to get off at Deerfield."

"Sorry, but I shouted out the name loud enough for all in the car to hear. Were you asleep?"

"Asleep! Of course not; and yet——"

A sudden suspicion of what had really happened flashed across his mind.

"Did you see a white-bearded old man get off at Deerfield?"

"Yes. He was quite lively for his years. He——"

That was all Tom waited to hear. The old man had robbed him. He was a confidence operator and fooled him nicely. He must recover that package of bonds at all hazard. They were negotiable securities and easily disposed of. Tom sprang to the other side of the platform and swung himself down on the last step. The train was now going quite fast. The track was running along the edge of an embankment and was approaching a culvert which spanned a country road twenty feet below.

In his excited state the boy did not notice that this was a bad spot to take a jump if that was in his mind. Under the most favorable conditions the train was going too quick for any sane person to think of leaping off without risking injury. The brakeman looked at him.

"Don't stand down there. It's against the rules of the—— Great hornspoons! he's jumped, and we are at the culvert!"

Tom had jumped, with a forward motion to partly overcome the momentum of the train. He turned half over in the air, hit the embankment on his side within a few feet of the culvert, rolled over and over at an angle that carried him over the extended wing of the masonry, at which point he shot out into the air and dropped like a flying meteor toward the road. Had he hit it, this story would have had to change to the nearest hospital, or perhaps come to a sudden termination owing to the unexpected exit of the hero to that realm whence no one returns.

Certainly it would be impossible for us to go on without our hero. It happened, however, that a load of hay was passing along the road and had just emerged from under the culvert when the young messenger shot downward. Instead of striking the hard road, he landed on top of the soft hay, which made all the difference in the

world. The hay gave with him and the hole he made prevented him from rolling off.

"Whoa!" shouted the astonished lad who was driving the team.

He had seen something shoot over the wing of the culvert, and then he heard the soft thud which the object made when it landed behind him. Tom was pretty badly shaken up by his experience. He was still half stunned from the shock of hitting the ground after his leap from the train, and scratched and rumpled from rolling down the bank. The least of his trouble was his collision with the hay. It shook him up a bit, naturally, and he lay there wondering what had happened to him. The farm lad leaned back and looked into the depression in his load. He fairly gasped, and his eyes bulged, when he saw that the flying object which had landed in his cart was a boy.

"Gosh all hemlock! If this doesn't beat creation. Where did he come from in the first place? I hope he ain't a dead one."

Tom proved he wasn't dead by kicking out, rolling over and then sitting up. The eyes of the two boys met.

"Say, are you practicing for a circus?" asked the farm lad.

Instead of answering the question Tom asked one himself.

"Where the dickens am I at?" he said.

"Where are you at? On top of my load of hay, of course. Where else?"

"How did I get here?"

"You ought'r know better'n me. I saw something coming through the air off the end of that culvert and the next thing I knew it lit on the hay. That was you. P'haps you'll explain how you came to do the aerial tumbling act?"

Then Tom began to recollect what had happened.

"I jumped off the train," he said.

"What! The train that just passed as I was driving under the culvert?"

"The train that passed that way," and Tom motioned with his arm.

"That's the one. What did you jump off for? You ain't crazy, are you?"

"No. I jumped because I wanted to get off. I didn't want to go on to the next station."

"Why didn't you get off at Deerfield? That's only a mile back. Didn't the train stop there?"

"It stopped there but I didn't know it."

"Why didn't you know it? Were you asleep?"

"No; I was dazed."

"Dazed! What do you mean by that?"

"I was doped by a confidence man who robbed me. But I can't stop here talking to you. I jumped off the train to catch him."

"Did he jump off ahead of you?"

"No, he got off at Deerfield. I am going there to see if I can track him down."

"Hold on," said the farm boy, as Tom started to scramble down. "I'm going to Deerfield with this load. I've got to deliver it at a stable. I'll take you there. Come over here onto the seat."

"But I'm in a hurry," said Tom.

"You can't run all that way, particularly after that tumble you had. I don't see how you can ever walk. I should think you'd be all done up. Ain't none of your bones out of place?"

"They seem to be all right, but I'm pretty sore. The skin is off my elbows."

"I should think it would be. Come over here and I'll start on as fast as the team'll go. I'll get you there as soon as you could go there on your feet, and faster, I guess."

Tom allowed himself to be persuaded. On the whole, he didn't think he was in condition to walk a mile, or even half of that distance. When he looked up at the top of the embankment whence he had shot down, he began to marvel at his lucky escape. At that moment the train came into sight backing down. The brakeman had notified the conductor about the boy falling or jumping off the platform, and that official stopped the train half a mile or more from the culvert and ordered it backed to the scene of the accident.

"Here comes the train back," said the farm lad. "You must have been seen to jump off and they have come back to pick up your remains; but they'll find you all together."

"Drive on and never mind the train. I've got no time to monkey around here and explain matters. The man who robbed me got \$10,000 worth of bonds out of my pocket."

"Did you have \$10,000 in your pocket?" gurgled the farm boy, evidently staggered by the enormity, to him, of that sum, as he started the team.

"Not in money—in bonds."

"Bonds is as good as money, ain't they?"

"Those are, for anybody can sell them for their market price. I can't afford to lose them."

"I should say not. Do they belong to you?"

"No. They belong to a gentleman named Swift who lives in Deerfield. He bought them through the bank I work for in Wall Street."

"Are you a bank clerk?"

"No, I'm a bank messenger."

"You carry things around for the bank?"

"Yes. I was sent here to deliver those bonds to Mr. Swift."

"If you don't catch the man, he'll be out ten thousand dollars."

"No, he won't. The bank will be out that amount."

"And what will be done to you?"

"I don't know that anything will be done to me, but it will give me a black eye with the boss."

"You mean the boss will lick you?"

"I don't mean any such thing."

"You said you'd get a black eye with him. How will you get it unless he licks you?"

"Say, you're awfully dense. Didn't you ever hear that expression?"

"I don't know what you mean. Just explain and then I'll know what you're driving at."

Tom explained and then the country boy understood.

"You might lose your job."

"No, I don't think I would. The boss thinks a lot of me, but, of course, if I lost those bonds it would kind of take his breath away."

"I should think it would. How do you expect to catch the man? He's got a good start on you."

"That's the worst of it. I intend to make inquiries at the station and try and find out which way he went. He was an old-looking chap, with a long, white beard. I'm satisfied that was a disguise, and that he wasn't nearly as old as he

represented himself to be. He'll figure that I'll be carried on to Plympton, and that it will take half an hour before I can wire to the police in Deerfield to look for him. Perhaps he knows there's a local train for Jersey City that will stop at Deerfield before that, which he can board and get away on. Do you know anything about the train service on the New Jersey Central?"

"I know the trains are running both ways quite often."

"I hope we will reach Deerfield before the next local, running north, stops there."

"I guess we will. I'll drive right to the station to accommodate you."

"Much obliged."

Then Tom thought about his pay envelope and his extra \$5. He felt in his pockets and found that the nice old gentleman had been satisfied with the package of bonds.

"He must have surmised it contained something of special value," he thought.

"Did he take all your money, too?" asked the farm boy.

"No. I guess he didn't have time, or was afraid to attract attention."

"How much money did you have?"

"Nearly seventeen dollars."

"You're lucky to save that."

"The loss of that wouldn't have worried me, though I would have been stuck here without funds to get back with. All I care about are the bonds. I was a chump to be so nicely fooled by that innocent-looking old chap. He said he was coming down to Deerfield to visit his daughter and grandchildren. He gave me a beautiful game of talk. I'm ashamed of myself for being such an easy mark," said Tom, in a tone of disgust.

If he ever felt like kicking himself he did at that moment.

"We're halfway to the station now," said the farm boy. "Gee up, Schneider!"

At that moment the bushes parted ahead of the wagon and a man jumped out into the road. He threw a hasty look at the load of hay, hurried across the road and disappeared into the bushes on the other side.

"Stop! Stop the team! I want to get down!" cried Tom, rising in sudden excitement.

"What's the matter?" asked the farm boy.

"You saw that white-bearded man who just crossed the road?"

"Yes."

"That's the man who robbed me."

As he spoke Tom slipped down from the seat and sprang into the road. He darted for the bushes where the confidence rascal had vanished and disappeared through them himself, leaving his late companion staring after him in no little wonderment.

CHAPTER V.—Tom Recovers the Bonds.

Tom made his way through the bushes as fast as he could in the direction taken by the man, whose speed proved that he was old only in appearance. After going a hundred yards, he caught sight of the rascal crossing an open space a short way ahead. The fellow did not look around, nor give any indication that he suspected he was being followed. He kept straight on, passing into a piece of woods.

Tom waited till he was under cover and then ran across the open ground. He might have overtaken the chap by an extra spurt when he caught sight of him again in the woods, but he was curious to see where the man was heading for. Besides, it was a lonesome place in which to attack the rascal, and if he was armed, or proved to be stronger of the two, Tom felt that the chances were he would lose the opportunity of recovering the package of bonds. So he followed his quarry with due caution lest the man should detect him coming on behind him. In this way a mile was traversed and then a country road loomed up ahead, and just beyond a large rambling structure surrounded by a tall hedge, eight or nine feet high. In the summer this hedge was thick, like a dense green wall, but now it was thin and scrawny-looking, and could easily be seen through.

It was impassable, however, for several lengths of barbed wire ran through it, preventing man and beast from getting through. In the center of the hedge wall that faced on the road was a tall iron gate, with spiked projection, wide enough for a carriage or an automobile to pass through and continued up the broad graveled driveway to the wide veranda of the house. There was also a small iron postern gate beside the big one for persons on foot, and beyond it a small stone lodge house.

The seeming old man stopped just inside the edge of the woods, which ended on that side of the road and proceeded to divest himself of his disguise. He rolled his white wig and flowing beard up in his drab coat and laid it on the ground. Then he dived into the hollow interior of a gnarled dead tree and pulled out a bundle which he unwrapped and shook out. It was a brown overcoat. He put it on, donned a soft cap he took from a side pocket, rolled up the drab coat with the beard, wig and broad soft crowned hat he had worn, and placed the outfit in the tree. This accomplished, he looked to be a well-built man of forty, and not an easy customer to handle. He crossed the road, rang the postern bell and was admitted to the enclosure by a red-headed boy.

The two entered the stone lodge. Tom crossed the road toward the hedge, thinking to force his passage that way, and found that he was blocked by the barbed wire.

"What shall I do now?" he asked himself. "That chap has gone into that stone house with the boy who let him in. I was a fool not to have tackled him in the wood and taken the chances of downing him. Now I can't get at him."

Tom crept up to the gates and looked at the spikes on top. They looked formidable. Getting desperate, he hauled himself to the top of the postern gate, and then by depending on his muscles he swung himself around the spikes that projected toward and above the hedge. Clearing them safely, he lowered himself to the ground on the inside. Looking toward the lodge, which was but a few feet away, he saw there was a window on either side of the door, and another window beyond. There were two windows on the low half-story above, which was surmounted by a sloping, Oriental shaped roof, covered with long, shallow, semi-circular red tiles. He walked around to the rear of the building and saw win-

dows there. He ventured to look in through one. His gaze rested on a small living room. At the table in the middle of the room sat the man who had robbed him, and standing near him was the red-headed boy.

The man was in the act of opening the package of bonds with a knife. He took the bonds out and examined them carefully one by one. The receipt he tore up, together with the paper containing the name and address of Mr. Swift, to whom the securities were sent. At that juncture an electric bell rang in the room.

"That's the gate," said the man to the boy, "go and see who it is."

As the boy went out, the man gathered up the bonds and placed them under a small pile of newspapers on a shelf. Then he went to the door and looked out. The boy was opening the big gate to admit an automobile and its occupants. The man walked out, leaving the door open.

Tom tried the window, found it was not fastened, and shoved it up. Being an active boy, he scrambled in at the window and alighted in the room. He had taken note of the place where the man had shoved the bonds. It was but the work of a moment for him to recover them and drop them in his pocket. He had observed the boy take a large key from a nail near the door before he went to the gate. A small key was hanging from a second nail. Tom jumped to the conclusion that it belonged to the postern gate. As it was much easier to leave by a gate than over the spikes at the top of the gate, Tom took it and then made his escape from the room via the window through which he had entered. Shutting the window, he waited for the man and the boy to return to the room. The boy did so almost immediately and hung up the big key. If he noticed the absence of the other, he probably supposed that the man had taken it. Tom looked around the corner of the lodge and saw the man talking with a gentleman seated in the back of the car. Presently the car went on toward the house and the man re-entered the lodge, closing the door after him.

"Now is my chance," breathed the young messenger.

He glided to the postern gate, inserted the key in the lock and let himself out. Then he retraced his steps over the course he had taken in following the man. He dashed across the road and entered the wood. In due time he came out on the road that led direct to Deerfield, not far from the spot where he left the team with the load of hay. Turning his face toward the town, he walked as fast as he could. He soon came to the first house in the suburbs. A man was leaning over a gate smoking. Tom addressed him.

"Can you tell me where Prospect avenue is?" he asked.

"It's about a quarter of a mile from here. Follow this road and it will take you to it," was the reply. "You will see the name on a lamp post."

Tom thanked him and kept on. The fifth street he came to proved to be the avenue he was in search of. As he did not remember the number of Mr. Swift's house, he stopped at the first residence he came to and made inquiry. The woman who came to the door said that Mr. Swift lived

two blocks up the street in a fine house, but she could not furnish the number. Tom went on two blocks and inquired again. This time the house he wanted to reach was pointed out to him in the next block. The young bank messenger entered a lawn cut off from the street by a hedge, walked to the front door and rang the bell. A maid came to the door and he asked if Mr. Swift was in. The servant said he was, and asked Tom into the reception hall.

"Tell Mr. Swift that a messenger from the Foster Bank in Wall street would like to see him," said Tom.

The maid returned in a few moments and told him to follow her. She led him to the library on that floor, where he saw an elderly gentleman seated in an easy-chair reading. The furniture of the room consisted of a large rug, a combination bookcase, a desk, safe, a lounge, table, chairs, and so forth.

"Mr. Foster sent me to deliver to you a package containing ten \$1,000 bonds of the American Sugar Refining Co., Mr. Swift," said Tom.

"Yes, yes," said the gentleman, holding out his hand.

"I regret to say that the package was taken from me en route on the train, opened and the bonds removed from it," with the receipt you were to sign."

"You have lost the bonds?" ejaculated Mr. Swift.

"For a time only. I followed the man who took them and got them back, but I had a narrow escape in jumping from the moving train. Here are the bonds. I shall have to ask you to write a receipt yourself."

The gentleman took the bonds, looked them over and pronounced them all right.

"Tell me how you happened to lose them," he said.

Tom told the story from beginning to end.

"I know the place you say you followed the man to. It's a private sanitarium, owned by a Doctor Morton. From your statement the rascal appears to be his lodgekeeper. I'm afraid it would be useless to proceed against him, for your story could not be corroborated in court. You were very fortunate in recovering the bonds. I will write you out a receipt for them."

As soon as Tom got the receipt he took his leave, and reached the station just in time to catch a local train for Jersey City. It was nearly dark then. He got home about half-past seven, and his mother was getting a bit anxious over his failure to show up till that hour on a Saturday afternoon. He explained where he had been sent by Mr. Foster, but said nothing about his experience with the nice old gentleman on the train. He realized that he had taken a desperate risk in leaving the train at the culvert, and that he would have landed either at a hospital or a morgue had not the load of hay come along at the right moment to save him. He told his story to Mr. Foster next morning.

"That rascal took me in nicely with his white beard and soft-solder talk," he said, "and I'm ashamed of myself for falling to the game. The only satisfaction I have is that I turned the tables on him in the end and got the bonds back."

"And you might have lost your life in the effort," said the banker.

"I wouldn't have been the first who lost his life in the line of his duty."

"That may be, but hereafter remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," said Mr. Foster, dismissing him.

Tom did remember it, for his risky leap at the culvert never faded from his mind.

About the middle of the week Tom overheard three brokers talking about L. & O. Tom was quite impressed with the possibilities of L. & O. going up from their talk, so the first chance he got he bought 300 shares on margin at the market price of 90. On Saturday of that week it went to 93. On that afternoon he called to take Daisy home. He found her in a peck of trouble about some work that had been spoiled, although she could not see how it had happened. She had had the work on her desk with the envelopes all typed ready to be mailed when Mr. Seymour called her away for a few minutes. When she returned to her desk the letters were all mussed up and torn, and she had to do them all over again.

"Somebody has done a mean trick to you," said Tom. "Who could it be?"

"There is nobody here would do it, unless it is Mr. Babbitt. He and I are not on the very best of terms," said Daisy.

"Well, I will go get something to eat and come back and help you," said Tom.

He did so, and when the work was complete she and Tom left the office together. Daisy had kept the spoiled letters to show Mr. Seymour on Monday.

On Monday L. & O. jumped to 110 3-8 and Tom at the first opportunity he got went over to the little bank and ordered his shares sold. When he got his statement he found he had made \$6,000. That raised his capital to \$10,000.

CHAPTER VI.—Clerk Babbitt Is Bounced.

L. & O. after reaching 112, began to recede without any quick slump, the syndicate supporting it out of their big profits and letting the outsiders down easy. Those who bought at top price lost some money, but were able to get out without serious inconvenience. Others lost money by not taking warning of what was coming, and there was quite a crop of these, mostly lambs. L. & O. was down to 99 when M. & N. began rising at a steady rate.

Tom overheard a broker talking to Mr. Foster about the stock, and the trader remarked it was a good thing for a quick snap. That afternoon Tom heard a different statement regarding M. & N. at an office where he carried a note from the cashier. He learned that a big syndicate had been cornering it for a matter of two weeks and that it was likely to jump up 15 points within the week. It was going then at 88, having risen from 84.

Tom decided to take a shy at it, and before he went home he bought 500 shares on margin at the little bank. He looked to see it go up one or two points next day, but it didn't. On the contrary, it dropped a point and a half. Several days passed and the price continued to drop till it reached 84 1-2. Then it recovered to 86, but next day fell back to 85. The boom that he had

heard was going to materialize that week had failed, for here was Saturday and he was \$1,500 out on the deal.

In addition he was up against interest charges on \$39,000 the bank had advanced to carry his stock, and \$125 commission when the deal was finally closed. The truth of the matter was the market was in bad shape just then, and stocks were not going up, even when kicked hard from behind. Tom's tip was all right, but the syndicate was lying on its oars.

As the combine had practically cornered the stock, this was costing a big sum of money, but the members of the syndicate were millionaires and could afford the strain. Tom took his lunch on the following Monday at the Empire Cafe, which was patronized chiefly by brokers and clerks on good salaries. There were a number of open boxes with tables arranged along one side of the room. There were four chairs in each, but frequently only two persons occupied a box. Between the last box and the back wall there was a small open space which held a small round table just large enough to hold the dishes for one.

Whenever Tom went there he took possession of this table, if not in use. On this occasion he got the table and was waited on. While eating he heard a familiar voice talking in the box behind him. He thought he recognized the tones of Chief Clerk Babbitt. He listened to make sure.

"I think I've cooked that girl's goose at last," the voice said. "Seymour dictated an important letter to her before he went out, she typed it, and he signed it after reading it over and finding it all right. She put it in an envelope and handed it, with several others, to Billy to mail. Billy brought the letters to me after she went to lunch and I opened two—the important one and another. I changed the enclosures and handed them back to the kid. He was on his way to the branch postoffice when I came over here. The changing of those two letters is going to cost the boss several thousand dollars, and the blame will fall on that smart little girl."

"That's the way I get square with people who do things to me. Seymour is sure to fire her, for he won't stand for such evident carelessness as enclosing an important letter in the wrong envelope, and then we'll have a new stenographer. As for that bank messenger downstairs, I've a nice little scheme in soak for him. He'll get his good and proper, and then I'll be satisfied."

Tom heard every word, and he knew that the speaker was Babbitt. He would have given considerable to have found out what kind of a scheme the clerk was going to work on him, but Babbitt did not say any more, and in a few moments he and his companion left the cafe. Tom didn't worry much about what was in "soak" for himself. He was much concerned over the trick the clerk had pulled off on Daisy. Well, he guessed he would be able to save her from blame by putting the facts before Broker Seymour right away.

Hastily finishing his lunch, he started over to the Exchange to see if Seymour was there. He went into the ante-room and sent one of the Exchange boys to find and bring him there. In a few minutes the broker came from the board room. He nodded at Tom.

"You want to see me, I believe?" he said.

"Yes, sir. I want to tell you what I overheard your clerk Babbitt tell a friend of his in the Empire Cafe about fifteen minutes ago," said Tom, who then told his story.

Seymour frowned as he listened.

"I'm glad you brought me this piece of information so soon, for the failure of that letter to reach its destination would cause me a loss of from five to ten thousand dollars. I will take measures at once to forward a duplicate."

Tom then told him about the mean trick that had been played on Daisy the preceding Saturday week, which had compelled her to reproduce half a dozen long statements on her own time.

"In that case there is no evidence against either Babbitt or the office boy, but there is no doubt in my mind that both of them were at the bottom of it. Babbitt is sore on Miss Darling, and on me, too," said Tom. "He's got some scheme to get square with me, but I didn't learn what it is. I fancy, however, that it will have to be something above the average to trap me with it."

"I hope you will not get caught, Lanston. Now I must get right over to my office and head off the mischief that man is the cause of."

With a nod the broker started to leave the building by the Wall Street exit, while Tom left by the messengers' entrance. Daisy was back at her table when her employer called her inside. He asked her if she had been careful in putting the important letter in the right envelope, and she assured him that she always was careful to see that a letter got into its proper envelope.

"That is one of the things that was impressed upon me at the business school," she said. "We were told never to seal up an envelope till we had made sure it contained the right enclosure. I gave Henry six letters to mail before I went to lunch. I am positive each envelope contained the proper letter. Perhaps I was a little extra careful with the important letter. I not only compared it with its envelope, but I put it on one side until I had sealed the others up."

"Well, Miss Darling, with all your care I have learned that the letter went to another person than the one it was addressed to. But you are not to blame. The letter, I feel satisfied, left your hands all right; but it got changed about in transit to the postoffice. Now go out and rewrite that letter from your notes and bring it to me with a properly addressed envelope."

Daisy, wondering how the letter could have got mixed up, and also how Mr. Seymour had so quickly detected the matter, returned to her table, made a new copy and brought it to the broker. Then he dictated a few additional words that he intended to enclose with the letter, and while the girl was typing it he rang for an A. D. T. messenger boy. As soon as the letter had been dispatched to the main postoffice he called in his office boy and put him through a "third degree" examination, which resulted in his making an abject confession of the iniquity he had practiced at Babbitt's behest, and for which he had received \$5 from the chief clerk. This statement included his admission of having spoiled the six statements which Daisy was obliged to rewrite on her machine.

"Now go behind that safe and stay there till I call you," said the broker.

Mr. Seymour went outside and told his cashier.

to send Babbitt in to him. When the chief clerk responded, the broker taxed him with his perfidy. Babbitt was staggered and showed his guilt in his face. He nevertheless denied the charge in toto. Then Mr. Seymour called the office boy and made him repeat his story.

"He's a little liar!" cried Babbitt desperately.

"He is not a liar, for his story has been practically corroborated by another person who overheard you make the admissions to an acquaintance in the Empire Cafe an hour ago," said the broker.

"Who is this other person?" faltered Babbitt, who knew it was all up with him.

"It doesn't matter. Do you admit the facts, or don't you?"

"I do not," said the clerk.

"As I am satisfied of your guilt, I cannot retain you longer in my employ. Get your week's wages from the cashier and go."

And that marked the finish of Babbitt in Seymour's office.

CHAPTER VII.—Trapped.

On the day that the foregoing events happened M. & N. recovered a point, closing at 86. Next day it was forced up another point, and on Wednesday it closed at the price Tom paid for it. There it remained till Friday, when it jumped to 90. Tom recovered his spirits when he saw that it was going up once more, and his confidence in the tip returned. During the short Saturday session it accumulated two points more, and its activity produced a favorable effect on most of the list. The market responded generally on Monday, and M. & N. went to 95. Two days later it hit par and then went to 101. Next day, after a hot fight in the boardroom, it went to 104 and a fraction, at which Tom sold it, clearing \$8,000. In the meantime Tom had heard that Babbitt had been discharged by Mr. Seymour. This was no surprise to him after the information he had furnished the broker. He would have been surprised if the clerk had not lost his job.

Daisy learned from Tom the truth about the mix-up of the important letter, and she was more grateful to him than ever for saving her from the trouble which must have ensued had the clerk's plans not been thwarted. She told her mother that Tom was the finest boy in the world, and Mrs. Darling agreed with her. Tom didn't worry much about what Babbitt had told his companion concerning himself. Now that the clerk was out of Wall Street, for he was hardly likely to connect with another position in the Street without a recommendation from his last employer, Tom guessed he was clear of him.

Babbitt, however, did not forget the young bank messenger. At noon Mr. Foster told him he had an important errand for him to execute.

"A man named Kurt has written to me requesting me to send him up five United States four per cent. coupon bonds, which he will pay for with a certified check on the Bowery Bank for \$500 and the balance in cash," said the banker. "The balance represents the premium and the interest to date. The bonds, with a detailed statement of the amount he is to pay, are in that envelope. Be careful to see that the check is

certified by the paying teller of the bank, and bears the stamp. You are familiar with this business, so the caution is hardly necessary. When you are satisfied that the money is all right hand him the bonds with the bill."

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

"Get your wages and start now. The address where you are to go is on the envelope. I trust you will not meet with any white-bearded old gentlemen on this errand," smiled the banker.

"If I should, I will know how to handle them," returned the young lad.

He looked at the address on the envelope, which ran as follows:

"Isidore Kurt, Lawyer, No. — East Broadway, near Canal Street."

Tom took an elevated train at Fulton and Pearl streets, changed at Chatham Square to the Second avenue line and rode to the Canal street station, where he got off. He found that the number he was in quest of was above Canal street, and located it about the middle of the block. The building appeared to be devoted to manufacturing pursuits, and Tom thought it odd that a lawyer should have his office there. He looked for Mr. Kurt's sign, but saw none.

"It's funny he hasn't got a sign down here at the door," said Tom to himself.

A tough-looking young man, who had been eyeing him from the moment he stopped at the entrance and began looking for Kurt's sign, swaggered up to him.

"Say, young feller, are you lookin' for Kurt?" he asked.

"Yes; how did you know?"

"'Cause he sent me down here to watch for you."

"Why hasn't he a sign? How does he expect people to find his office?"

"He's only got his office here for a while till he gets a new one. He was burned out the other day and lost all his things, but he won't lose nothin'. He calculates he'll make somethin' out of the insurance. As soon as he can find another office on Canal street he'll move out of here," said the tough.

"I see," said Tom, who understood now why the lawyer was in that building. "I thought it was funny for a lawyer to have his office in a building where there appeared to be nothing but manufacturing plants."

"That's right. It ain't usual," nodded his conductor. "I don't reckon he'll be here till next Saturday."

The building had five stories, and Tom was led to the top one. When they reached the top floor Tom saw a piece of white cardboard tacked on a door which read:

"Isidore Kurt, Attorney-at-Law. Office hours, 10 to 5."

The young tough opened the door and Tom walked in. There was one chair in the room and nothing else.

"Sit down and I'll go in and tell Kurt you are here," said the tough.

Tom didn't sit down, but went to the window and looked out. It was a rear prospect that

lay before him—the backs of other manufacturing establishments facing on another street. A few male employees in their short sleeves could be seen here and there. Some of these were putting on their coats and hats. While Tom was taking in the few sights, his arms were suddenly seized from behind and a bag was pulled down over his head.

Then somebody grabbed him in front and held him while his hands were tied together. Almost before he realized what was happening he was helpless. He was half dragged, half hustled into another room, where he felt a pair of hands go through his clothes and relieve him not only of the envelope containing the bonds, but his pay envelope and such change as he had about him. Then he was forced into a chair and bound to it.

During all this time not a word had been exchanged by the three or four persons engaged in the outrage. The parties then went into the next room and Tom heard them talking, but owing to the bag that covered his head he could not make out a word they said. Finally he heard a door close by slammed, a key turned in it, and the retreating steps of the rascals die away. Another door was banged, and after that—silence.

Up to this point the young messenger's thoughts had been in a complete whirl. Now he began to think clearly. The whole thing was a plant.

"Isidore Kurt, Lawyer," was a myth, and his alleged letter a scheme to decoy a messenger from the Foster Bank, with the bonds, into the hands of a bunch of crooks. That's the way Tom sized the case up. What was he to do? The bonds were gone, and with them the rascals. He was bound to a chair, and was practically gagged by the bag, for he could hardly project a sound through it. He began to twist himself in the chair, with a view of loosening his bonds, but found that the men had bound him too tight to make any impression on the cords. His feet were secured to the lower front rung, but not so tight as his body was tied to the back of the chair. He worked his feet up and down and pulled at the cord as well as he could. His exertions caused the chair to slide backward by degrees. It suddenly came in contact with some obstruction at the moment when Tom gave a vicious tug with both legs. Over went the chair, with the boy, and both crashed over the obstruction. The chair, which was not over strong, went to pieces, and the boy was practically released from it. He rolled over when he got his breath back, and found that the obstruction the chair had met with was a heavy and short piece of a floor beam. Struggling to rise, he discovered that the chair had been shattered, but the back of it, and the rungs and two front feet, clung to him on account of the cord.

After some effort he managed to shake himself clear of both. It remained now for him to free his hands, bound behind him, but this seemed impossible of accomplishment. Finally an idea struck him. He walked over to the one window and smashed one of the panes with a kick. This, as he expected, left some jagged glass standing in its frame.

He backed up against the biggest piece, and, using care so as not to cut himself, he worked the cord across it. In five minutes he sawed

through one of the cords, and a tug released the rest of it, leaving him free.

"Heavens, this has been the toughest experience I've had yet, but I'm getting out of it by degrees," he said.

When he tried the door he found it locked with the key on the other side. It was not a heavy door, and Tom saw that the only way he could get out of the room was to smash it. He picked up the big piece of floor beam and fired it at the panel nearest the lock. One blow cracked it all the way up, and two more put a hole in it. Tom shoved his arm through the hole and unlocked the door.

"I suppose the other door is locked, too. If it is, I'll serve it the same way. I must get out of this building as soon as I can and notify the police," he said.

Carrying the piece of floor beam with him, he went to the outside door and found it locked. He commenced operations on it at once. It was a stouter door than the other one and gave him more trouble, but he finally smashed one of the panels. The key was not on the outside. The rascals had carried it away with them. To get out he would have to break the lock. Then he thought of an easier way, which was to use the large blade of his knife as a chisel, and a leg of the chair for a hammer. He put this plan in operation, but it took time, for he had to work slowly, chipping off the wood a little at a time to avoid breaking the blade of his knife. When he exposed the catch, he broke it off with the end of one of the chair rungs. As the door opened inward there was then no further trouble in opening it. The stairs was before him, and he walked down the three flights.

He found his way to the Seventh Precinct station house, where he told his story. After he was questioned by the captain, who was in his office, a couple of detectives were put on the case, but as Tom had only seen one of the crooks, their capture was regarded as doubtful unless they were traced through the bonds.

CHAPTER VIII.—Tom Rounds Up the Bond Thieves.

After leaving the police station Tom went uptown to call on Mr. Foster at his house on Madison avenue. It was an unpleasant task he had before him—to report the loss of the bonds; but he didn't see how he could be blamed for their loss. He rang the bell at the banker's home and asked the maid if Mr. Foster were in. He was told that he was, and invited in. The banker was reading the afternoon paper when Tom was announced to him. The gentleman figured that it must be something important that had brought his messenger to his house, and concluded that it had a connection with the bonds. He told the maid to bring the boy to his library.

"Well, Tom, what has brought you here? Some slip in connection with the bonds?"

"The affair was a plan worked by two or more crooks. I was captured and the bonds, together with my wages, taken from me!"

"What!" cried the banker.

Then Tom told his story from first to last.

"You say you have laid the matter before the police?" said the banker.

"Yes, sir; just as soon as I made my escape from the building."

"How much of a start did the rascals get of you?"

"I should say all of an hour."

Mr. Foster called up Police Headquarters and asked if the robbery of his messenger had been reported there. He was told that it had, and that two men were working on the case, but they had very little information to go on. The police wanted the numbers and full description of the bonds, and Mr. Foster said he would send it to them. He and Tom went down to the bank. The banker got the information out of his desk and sent it to Headquarters by Tom. After delivering the banker's note at Headquarters, Tom went home. He told his mother what had happened to him and the five bonds, and she was not a little disturbed by it. As he did not care to hang around the house, and supper would not be ready for an hour or two, he went out on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street.

He dropped in at the Colonnade Billiard and Pool Parlor to see a friend of his who was employed as cashier there. While talking to his friend, whose name was Dick Brown, Tom saw Clerk Babbitt come in, accompanied by a young man who seemed to be the counterpart of the young tough who had met him at the doorway of the building on East Broadway, and piloted him up to the top floor, where he was made a prisoner and robbed.

Tom was not a little surprised—not so much at seeing Babbitt, but at the remarkable likeness his companion bore the crook connected with the bond robbery. He stared at the fellow till he was almost ready to swear he was the same party.

"Have you ever seen those two before?" he asked his friend.

Dick Brown looked at the new arrivals.

"Oh, yes. They come in here quite often. The big man is employed somewhere down in Wall Street. The other chap is a political henchman of the leader of this district. I have an idea he gets along without working at any regular job. His name is Vickers."

Babbitt and Vickers seemed quite at home in the place, and, walking to a door, disappeared.

"Where does that door lead to?" Tom asked.

"A corridor, where we have several private card rooms."

"I suppose I can take a look out there?"

"Oh, yes, if you want to."

Tom had an object in going there, and that was to try and get a closer view of Vickers if he could manage it. Reaching the corridor, which was empty, he saw the doors of the card rooms facing on it. He guessed that Babbitt and his companion had gone into one of them. He passed softly from one to the other, listening a moment at the keyhole, to see which one they had entered. He spotted them in the last one, and entering the one adjoining, he placed his ear to the thin wall and listened. Their conversation reached his ears quite distinctly, for they made no effort to talk low, as Babbitt had taken the precaution to look into that room before they entered the other, and felt satisfied they were in no danger of being overheard. Then he knew that

the card rooms were rarely occupied before nine or ten at night, and from that on till the house was closed up.

"How are you going to get rid of those bonds, Babbitt?" were the first words Tom heard, and then he knew that Vickers really was the chap he suspected him to be, and it also appeared that Babbitt had a hand in the matter, too. Perhaps that was the scheme the ex-clerk had in mind against him when he dropped the hint that day in the Empire Cafe.

"How fortunate it was that I stopped in here to see Brown," thought Tom. "I am likely to learn something now that will lead to the arrest of the bond robbers and the recovery of the securities."

He listened intently and heard Babbitt say:

"I'll get rid of them all right, don't you worry, Vickers. I'm going to sell them in Jersey City or Philadelphia first thing on Monday morning. That messenger, whom I hate like a dose of poison, is not likely to get away from that loft till Monday morning. I saw to it that he was tied up to stay tied, and the bag will prevent any cries he might make from being heard if anybody should come into the building to-morrow. When the people on the floor below come to work on Monday morning at half-past seven or eight, he will probably make noise enough to attract attention, and that will lead to his release."

"But he'll be half starved by that time," said Vickers.

"Let him. It will be good punishment for him."

"He might be smothered by the bag."

"No fear. I jabbed a number of holes in it to let in air enough to keep him alive. By the time the police hear of the robbery I will have sold the bonds, and later on I'll give you and Feeney your shares."

The arrangement was \$200 apiece," said Vickers.

"That's right."

"What have you done with the bonds?"

"They're in my trunk at my new boarding house."

"Where did you move to?"

Babbitt gave the address and Tom made a note of it on one of his cuffs.

"Talking is dry. Push the button and let's have something to drink."

In a couple of minutes the waiter came and took their order. Vickers said that he and Feeney, as soon as they got their share of the cash, were going to Chicago to have a good time. They had been wanting to go for some time, but couldn't raise enough money to make it an object to take the trip.

"With \$200 in our clothes we can have a swell time for a month," said Vickers. "Then we'll come back satisfied we've had our money's worth."

With the coming of the drinks Vickers proposed a game of pinochle for fifty cents a game. Babbitt agreed and they began playing. Tom, having learned all he thought was necessary to insure the arrest of Babbitt and his two associates and the recovery of the bonds, left the room and rejoined his friend.

"You were gone some time. Meet somebody you knew out there?" asked Brown.

"Yes. I ran across a chap I was very anxious to see. But I can't stop any longer. My sup-

per will be ready by the time I get back to the house."

Tom went at once to a drug store, where he got the use of a public telephone. He called up Mr. Foster and got him.

"I've got a line on the chaps that done me up and stole the bonds," he said.

"You have!" cried the banker, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes. I think it will be an easy matter to arrest them. They are not real crooks, after all. I know where the bonds are at this moment, and there should be no trouble in getting them. I should like to see you before the police are called upon to close up the matter. I think it would expedite matters if you called at my house, say an hour or so from now.

"The guilty parties live in Harlem, and the bonds are hidden in the room of one of them—the man who put up the job. His plan is to take them to Jersey City or Philadelphia first thing on Monday morning and sell them. He has no idea that I have escaped from the place where I was left, and he confidently believes that I won't get away before Monday morning, when the people in the building come to work. It will be something of a jolt to him and his two confederates when the police take them into custody."

"How did you discover all these facts?" asked Foster.

"I'll explain everything when I see you. When shall I expect you?"

"I'll come right away."

"There's no occasion for rush, as the matter will keep. Get your dinner first. I'm going home to get mine now. I'll look for you around eight."

"Very well, if you think the delay will make no difference."

"The parties are well known around here, and have no suspicion that their connection with the robbery is known, or likely to be known. The delay of an hour or two can hardly amount to much."

The banker promised to be at his messenger's flat at eight o'clock, and Tom rang off and left the drug store. He found supper ready and waiting for him when he reached home. A few minutes before eight the bell rang and Mr. Foster appeared. Tom showed him into the parlor and then told him how he had got on to the identity of the bond thieves, and the gist of the conversation he had overheard between Babbitt and Vickers. An hour later, Foster, Tom and a detective, accompanied by a locksmith and provided with a search-warrant, called at the address written on the young messenger's cuff.

"Does Samuel Babbitt live here?" the banker asked the maid who answered the door.

"He has just taken a room in the house. His trunk arrived yesterday," she answered.

"Is he in now?"

"No, sir."

"Show us the way to his room," put in the detective. "I have a search warrant that authorizes us to open his trunk and go through his effects."

"I think the girl had better call the lady of the house," said the banker.

The madame was in the basement and came

up when the frustrated maid told her about the errand of the visitors.

"What is the meaning of this thing?" she asked.

The detective showed her the warrant and said that was all the explanation she was entitled to. The party was shown to Babbitt's room, his trunk was opened and the five U. S. bonds were found in it. As the party was going downstairs Babbitt walked in at the front door. When his eyes fell on Tom he started back and turned pale.

CHAPTER IX.—Babbitt and Vickers Try to Evade the Issue.

"Good evening, Mr. Babbitt," said Tom, with mock politeness.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the ex-clerk, glaring at him.

"I came here with Mr. Foster, whom you doubtless recognize, this detective and a locksmith to search your trunk for the five bonds you and your two friends stole from me this afternoon on the top floor of an East Broadway building," replied the young messenger.

Babbitt gave a gasp and started to say something, but the words died in his throat.

"Officer, arrest that man," said Foster.

The ex-clerk submitted without protest, and the entire party went on to the police station. The charge was made against Babbitt and he was locked up. Then Mr. Foster asked for the arrest of Vickers and Feeney.

"What's their first names?" asked the captain.

The banker looked at Tom for this added information.

"I didn't learn their first names," he said. "Vickers is a henchman of the leader of the district, and Feeney is probably a ward heeler, too."

"I know the men. You can identify them as connected with this case?"

"I can swear to Vickers, but I did not see Feeney at the time of the robbery."

"Then what's the use of having the man arrested? He is certain to be discharged when brought before the magistrate," said the captain to Foster.

"We are satisfied he was one of the three men, but it will probably be hard to prove it," replied the banker.

"Have you got a case against Vickers?"

"Yes, we've got evidence against him."

"I'll have Vickers brought in, then, but I won't bother with Feeney."

The captain called a detective and told him to go and get Vickers, who would probably be found at one of his usual haunts at that hour. Mr. Foster was told to be present with his witnesses at the Harlem Police Court in the morning. The bonds were retained by the police as evidence in the case, and a receipt handed the banker. Next morning at eleven o'clock Tom and the banker were in the court. After several drunks and disorderlies had been quickly disposed of, Babbitt and Vickers were brought to the bar. The latter had only remained an hour in a cell after his arrest, for he sent for the district leader and was at once bailed out.

He and the clerk pleaded not guilty of the charge entered against them. Then Tom took the

stand and told his story. He positively identified Vickers as the person who had met him at the street door of the East Broadway building, and led him upstairs to see the fictitious Lawyer Kurt. He described what happened to him after he reached the top floor. The detective who found the bonds in Babbitt's trunk testified to the fact.

Babbitt denied that he was in the building or knew anything about the robbery, and when the magistrate asked him to explain how the five bonds, identified by Mr. Foster as those he had sent to the bogus Lawyer Kurt by his manager in response to the letter which he handed the judge, he professed complete ignorance about them, swearing that he did not put them in his trunk, and did not know they were there.

"The trunk is your property, isn't it?" said the magistrate.

"I admit it is."

"Has anybody else access to it?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"The key has always been in your possession?"

"I guess so."

"How long have you been lodging at your present abode?"

"About two days."

"Your trunk was there at the time the bonds were stolen?"

"Yes."

"I will continue this case till to-morrow afternoon to enable both of you to produce witnesses establishing an alibi. If you fail to do this, I shall commit you both to the Tombs. Next case!"

That evening Daisy called at the Lanston flat and Tom told her about the bond robbery, and how it had been engineered by Babbitt.

"He is now in a cell at the precinct station, and is pretty certain to find his way to the Tombs to-morrow," he said. "He is likely to get all that is coming to him."

The stenographer was surprised to learn that the ex-clerk had descended to crooked business, but we can't say that she wasted much sympathy on him. Next morning Tom secured a fine tip through a stenographer he was acquainted with. This young lady worked for a big operator worth several millions, which he had largely accumulated through syndicates he was connected with from time to time. He and his associates seldom failed to push their operations through to a successful end, and they were known as a power in Wall Street.

The stenographer accidentally learned that a new combine, engineered by her employer, was cornering X. & Y., and that the syndicate expected to push the price up 20 points or more. Tom met the girl on the way downtown, and she put him wise to the whole business. He knew that the young lady was in a position to know, and her explanation as to how she secured her information convinced him that he could safely take a chance on it. So when he went to lunch he bought 1,000 shares of X. & Y. at 95 on margin, and put up \$10,000 of his money as security.

That afternoon in the Harlem Court Vickers produced two witnesses who swore that the election district captain had been in their company ever since noon, and that it was manifestly impossible that he could have been on East Broadway at the time sworn to by Tom Lanston. As the

district leader had seen the magistrate privately that morning, the arbiter of the case accepted Vicker's alibi and let him go. Babbitt also produced two witnesses who swore to practically the same thing in his favor. The magistrate accepted his alibi also, but held him on the new charge of having stolen property in his possession, and he was remanded to the Tombs. Soon after he reached the City Prison he was bailed out through the instrumentality of Vickers.

Next morning he was rearrested on the original charge, as the banker did not propose to let him escape through politics if he could help it. Vickers was also taken in on the original charge, and the Tombs magistrate, after hearing Tom's story, and the statement of the alibi witnesses, declined to release the men, and sent them back to their cells, where they were immediately bailed out by bondsmen furnished by the district leader uptown. Nothing more could be done till the matter went before the Grand Jury. On the following Saturday, at which time X. & Y. was up to par, when Tom came out of the bank to go home he was met by a strange man who suggested that he would find it to his interest to reconsider his testimony affecting Babbitt and Vickers when he was called before the Grand Jury.

"I don't care to discuss the matter with you, sir," replied Tom. "You are evidently a friend of the accused and acting in their interests. I am not pressing the charge against them. Mr. Foster is doing that, and I can tell you this much, that he intends to push the matter to the limit. I can also inform you that he has money and influence enough to secure a square deal, too. The witnesses that Vickers brought to prove an alibi lied, and I know they did. I am perfectly satisfied that Babbitt's witnesses lied also. I shall testify to the truth before the Grand Jury when I am called upon. I shall do the same in court if the men are brought to trial. I know they are both guilty, but if they can escape I can't help that. It is my opinion they will be convicted. Good day," and Tom walked off, leaving the man looking after him.

X. & Y. advanced to 105 during the first part of the following week, and then set the Exchange by the ears by jumping to 115 in one hour. It was going at 117 3-8 when Tom found the chance to sell out, and he added a profit of \$22,000 to his capital, making him worth \$40,000. He shook hands with himself and felt satisfied that unless he got a bad setback he would realize his ambition of getting rich.

CHAPTER X.—The Strange Old Gentleman.

Wednesday of the ensuing week was Decoration Day, and Tom Lanston decided to take a bicycle trip out on Long Island with his friend Dick Brown, who had secured a substitute so he could get off. They started right after breakfast for the Ninety-second Street ferry, where they meant to cross the East River. This took them to the foot of Fulton avenue, in Astoria, and thence they made their way into Grand and pushed out toward the suburb. It was a fine warm morning and they made good time.

Both were good on the wheel, and their endurance was equal to a long spin. They intended to

strike the railroad toward sundown and return by train, with their wheels in the baggage car. That arrangement prevented them worrying about the distance they traveled on the road out. About one o'clock they struck a roadhouse and got a good meal for seventy-five cents apiece. Then after making some inquiries they went on again.

They passed through a number of villages along their route, where they found a creditable display of bunting in honor of the day. They stopped twice to see ball games played upon an open lot by amateur nines of some ability, each team encouraged by a host of rooters. About five o'clock they concluded it was time to figure on the location of the nearest railroad station. They met a farmer out in his light wagon and asked.

"About two miles farther on you will come to a road leading south, or to your right. That road will take you to Steelville, where there is a station. The distance from here is about twelve miles."

"Thanks," said Tom.

"Wait a minute," said the farmer. "Two miles this side of Steelville the road turns off to the right and a branch road forks at that point. Be sure and keep to your right and you will go straight into the village, within a few blocks of the station."

"Much obliged," said Brown. "We will remember. Where does the branch road lead to?"

"It leads off across the railroad some miles east of Steelville to Kelso, a small village."

The farmer drove on and the boys continued on their way.

"There's no hurry," said Brown. "We can easily make the twelve-mile run inside of an hour."

"Too bad that we forgot to get a time-table. We may reach Steelville just after a train has been there, which would make a long wait."

"Which we could fill in getting our supper. Hello, I believe there's a thunderstorm coming up."

"By George! You're right. We'll have to get a move on or we may get a wetting," said Tom.

They increased their pace and soon reached the road where they were to turn off. As the storm was coming up from the southwest they were now cutting across its course and could make note of its progress without turning around. The descending sun disappeared behind the bank of black clouds, and the air grew dark rapidly.

"We have ten miles to go according to the farmer," said Tom.

"We can do it in twenty minutes on this road," replied Brown.

"The storm is liable to reach us before then."

"It won't be in this neighborhood for half an hour."

"Maybe it won't, but at the rate it appears to be traveling I rather doubt your assertion."

They put on a spurt and had made five miles when something suddenly went wrong with Tom's wheel. For fear of getting a header he took his feet off the treadles and slowed down. Seeing his companion falling behind rapidly, Dick Brown slowed up to see what was the matter. When he came to a stop and looked around he saw Tom some distance back off his wheel and doing something to it. He rolled his bike to the fence and waited for Tom to come up. And during this

delay the thunderstorm came on apace. The air continued to grow darker, the thunder became louder, and the lightning more vivid.

"It's no shower, but a real corking storm," muttered Brown. "I wish he'd hurry up. I wonder what's the matter with his machine, anyway?"

Ten minutes passed, and then Tom remounted and came on.

"What was the matter?" asked Brown.

"A screw worked loose in the pedal, and it needs a screwdriver to tighten it properly. I had to use my knife. That's why it took so long. I don't think it will stand the hot speed we've been making. We'll have to go slower."

"All right, but we are pretty certain to get a ducking that will make us look as if we'd been in the bay yonder."

"Oh, we are bound to meet with several houses before we are caught and we can put up at one of them till it is over."

"I'm thinking that will have to be the programme."

They ran out another mile and Tom had to stop again to tighten up. By the time they got started again the clouds were over their heads and beyond, and the wind, sure precursor of what is coming, was sweeping in gusts across the road, whirling the dust in their faces. It was dark as night now, and the storm was almost on them, but a flash of lightning showed them what they took to be a house ahead on the left side of the road.

"Hurry up with your repairs or we'll catch it before we can make the house!" cried Brown impatiently.

Tom, aware that they had no time to lose, rushed things, and they were mounted again and off like two gulls flying close in shore in a gale. Brown, in his rush, forged ahead farther and farther, and Tom lost sight of him in the darkness except when the scene was illuminated by the lightning. It began raining, after a terrific clap of thunder, preceded by a brilliant electrical display. Tom saw Brown a quarter of a mile ahead, going like the wind, and that was the last he saw of him. The wind rushed down like a million of furies, and brought the rain in a fierce downpour.

Brown had kept to the right and passed the branch, with the house close ahead. Tom, with his head down, and confused by the wind and rain, kept straight on and passed into the branch. As the lightning glared he raised his head to look for the house and his friend, but saw no signs of either. It never struck him that he was off the right road to Steelville. He increased his speed at the risk of taking a tumble, but the screw held better now and he kept up the spurt. It was so dark that he could see nothing at all except when the lightning flashed. It was like riding at full speed through a tunnel, with only the general knowledge that the way was clear ahead.

"Where in thunder am I, anyway?" Tom asked himself in some bewilderment. "Dick must be a mile ahead and close to town by this time. I'll be as limp as a soaked rag when I get there."

At that moment a flash of electricity revealed a house standing back from the road a short distance ahead.

"Shelter at last!" he muttered, noting the light in the window, which shone like a glowworm in the darkness.

He slowed down and stopped in front of the wooden gate. Dismounting, he opened the gate and rushed the wheel up to the porch. Resting it against the side of the house, he looked around for the bell handle. He found it and gave it a couple of pulls, indicating urgency. In a few moments he heard a chain let down and the door was opened, revealing a middle-aged woman, of unpleasant aspect, with a lamp in her hand.

"What do you want?" she asked, after peering out at him.

"Shelter from this storm," replied Tom politely.

A gust of wind swooped down on the house and the lamp was extinguished, leaving the entrance hall in darkness. The woman uttered an exclamation and drew back. Whether she intended to close the door and shut Tom out is a matter of conjecture, for she did not invite him to come in. As the rain was beating fiercely around his feet, Tom took the liberty of inviting himself in, and suiting the action to the thought, he brushed past the woman. She put up no protest, but closing the door, fumbled with the chain until she had readjusted it, and then she passed into a room as dark as the hall. Tom ventured to follow her, as he saw no good of remaining in the hall, and stood by the door till she relighted the lamp. He then explained how he and his friend had been caught in the storm while trying to reach Steelville on their wheels, and then asked if his friend had come there for shelter. The woman shook her head, and held up the lamp and looked narrowly at him.

She felt of his clothes, and, observing how wet they were, she suggested that he had better change them. Tom wondered how he was going to do that. Putting the lamp on the center table, the woman disappeared through a door. Hardly had she gone when the door from the hall slowly opened and the face of an old gentleman of perhaps sixty-five appeared looking in. He seemed surprised and somewhat disturbed on observing the boy standing in the room near the table. He disappeared, but reappeared almost immediately. He began making signs to Tom.

"How do you do, sir?" said the young messenger. "I have taken the liberty of——"

"Hush!" said the old gentleman, putting his finger to his lips.

He looked toward the door through which the woman had gone with evident apprehension, and seemed to be listening. He took a cautious step toward Tom, who was watching his odd actions with puzzled surprise, and had lifted his foot to take a second one, when a noise in the direction of the other door caused him to suddenly vanish into the hall and close the door after him softly.

"I wonder if he's all right in his upper story?" thought Tom, as the woman came back.

"Come with me," she said.

Tom followed her, and was led through an entry with a flight of stairs into the kitchen of the house, where a bright fire was burning in the stove, and preparations for a meal were going on. Here the boy found a sullen-looking man, seated near the stove, smoking. He glanced at the young stranger in a sulky, unfavorable way. Then he got up with some reluctance.

"Follow me," he said to Tom, in growling tones.

The Wall Street boy did not like the man's look nor manner, but he felt that he could not refuse the invitation, since he was only in the house on sufferance. The man, with the aroma of poor tobacco floating behind him, took Tom into still another and small entry, and up a narrow back stairway to the floor above, and then up another flight to an attic room, the performance being carried on in the dark. The man struck a match and lighted a candle. He went to a closet and pulled out a pair of trousers and a velveteen sack coat.

"Take off your clothes and get into these," he said, in the same sulky way.

He went to the window and looked out into the storm. With the rain beating heavily on the window panes, the house shaking in the grasp of the wind, the room weirdly illuminated by the lightning, and the thunder crashing with terrible distinctness overhead, Tom changed his wet clothes for the dry ones, feeling like a cat in a strange garret. The man smoked with his back to him, but Tom caught an indistinct reflection of his forbidding countenance in the ebony panes.

The fellow never budged as the lightning threw his burly figure into bold relief. He turned around as Tom drew on the velveteen jacket, and gathering up the boy's wet pants and jacket, blew out the light and gruffly bade him follow him downstairs. As they passed through the darkness of the second landing, Tom felt a clutch on his arm. At that moment the lightning illuminated the landing for a moment through a window in the rear, and he saw the old gentleman standing half out of a door. He seemed to shrivel up in the glare and fade away behind the door like an apparition which has revealed itself for a moment. Tom was more puzzled than ever by the old man's strange conduct, and as darkness fell around him again he could have sworn that the whispered word "Beware!" came floating after him.

Tom was led to the kitchen, where he was seated at the table by the side of the sulky man. He wondered if the old man was the owner of the house. Tom sized the woman up a sort of housekeeper. Tom was surprised at them offering him a meal and told them so. Then he introduced himself and said he lived in New York and worked in a bank in Wall Street; that he was on his way to Steelville. They told him he was on the wrong road for that place, that he would have to go back fully a mile to reach the right road. After the meal the man and woman both left the room. Tom did not like the looks of the pair. Suddenly the woman entered the room and asked Tom to look over some papers she held, and as Tom glanced over them he saw they were valuable stocks. One had a splash of blood on it.

Tom asked who the stocks belonged to, and the woman said to her and her husband. They were made out to William J. Austin.

"Is that your name?" asked Tom.

"What difference does it make what my name is?" answered the man.

"No difference to me," said Tom.

"Suppose we want to sell this stock, can we?" snarled the man.

"If you own the stock you can offer it for sale whenever you feel disposed to," answered Tom.

The man and woman walked over by the window and consulted in low tones.

At that moment the door through which Tom had entered the kitchen opened on a crack and a hand tossed a crumpled bit of paper toward Tom. Then the door closed again.

CHAPTER XI.—Conclusion.

Tom looked at the pair talking together, then slipped quietly off his chair and reached for the piece of paper. Reseating himself, he opened it. This is what he read:

"My name is William J. Austin. I am detained a prisoner in my own house by the man and woman who are my servants. I have managed to escape from my room, but I cannot get out of the house, as the doors and windows are all secured. If you have any money about you, do not display it or something might happen to you. Those people have compelled me to sign small checks on my account at the Steelville Bank. They dare not take chances on large ones. They have got possession of stock in the N. J. Smelting Co. belonging to me, which they intend to sell and then leave the country with the money. If you would do me a kind service, deliver this note to the president of the Steelville Bank as soon as you can.

"WILLIAM J. AUSTIN."

As Tom finished reading the note the man and the woman finished their consultation. The boy crushed the paper in his fingers, dropped a magazine he had been looking over, as if by accident, and reached down to pick it up. Before doing so he shoved the paper into the back of his shoe. Then he straightened up and put the magazine back on the table.

"How long would it take to sell that stock through a broker?" the man asked Tom.

"He might be able to do it in an hour, or it might take him longer," replied the boy.

"And when would we get the money?"

"Next day, probably."

"Isn't this good stock?"

"Yes. It's par value is \$50 a share, but its market value is but \$40. It isn't what I would call gilt-edged, but it's good."

"Wrap up them certificates again, Molly. I'll take them to New York one of these days and sell them," said the man.

He went to the shelf near the stove, took down a cigar box partly full of smoking tobacco, and began refilling his pipe. While he was thus engaged, and his wife was wrapping up the certificates, Tom went to the window and looked out. The night was still black and threatening, but the rain had stopped and the boy was eager to get away from the house, not only on his own account, but in the interest of the old gentleman who was in the power of his two servants, whose purpose was to rob him of as much as they could get away with.

"It seems to be clearing up," he remarked. "I'll step into the entry and put on my own clothes."

As Tom spoke he walked toward the chair on which the man had laid them. The man was a mite quicker than he and reached the chair first.

"There ain't no use of you going to-night," he said. "It's half-past eight. The last train going through to Brooklyn stopped at Steelville fifteen minutes ago. If you went on there you'd have to put up at a hotel, and that would cost you, with breakfast, a dollar and a half. You can save that by staying here. You're welcome to the attic room, and the old woman will see that you have breakfast in time to catch the first morning train."

Tom didn't believe that the last train for Brooklyn had passed Steelville at 8.15. In any event, he much preferred to spend \$1.50 to remaining all night in that house. Besides, he had to call on the president of the Steelville Bank to hand him the note he had received from the old gentleman, so that Mr. Austin could be rescued from his situation at the earliest possible moment.

"As I am a stranger to you, and you and your wife have already put yourselves out considerably for me, I don't feel that I can impose further on your generous hospitality. I will therefore take my leave, with many thanks for what you have both done for me," said Tom politely.

"It's liable to rain hard again at any minute," he said. "Look out and you'll see it's as black as ink."

"It's only a three-mile run to Steelville, and I'll take the chance of more rain. I wouldn't mind staying so much, only my friend is surely wondering where I am, and he will be worried about me."

"Well, if you're determined on going, I suppose you must," said the man, shutting the door. "Follow me upstairs and you can put on your clothes."

"What's the use of taking that trouble? I can change them in the entry."

"The clothes you've got on belong up there, and I'd rather you'd take them back where you got them."

With the boy's jacket and trousers on his arm the man led the way up the back stairs once more, and they soon reached the attic, where the candle was relighted and Tom proceeded to make the change in his apparel. He was about done when the man suddenly blew out the candle. Before Tom could make a move the fellow glided out of the room, shut the door after him and turned the key in the lock, thus making a prisoner of the boy.

Tom heard the closing of the door and the snap of the key. He knew what had taken place, but to make sure he went to the door and tried it. It was fast. There were two small windows in the garret. Tom went to one, but found it could only be opened a couple of inches, and that the shutter on the outside was nailed fast. The same conditions applied to the other window. While he was considering the situation he suddenly heard the exclamation "Hist!" from the door.

"Who's there?" he asked, suspecting it was the old gentleman who was trying to make his presence known through the keyhole.

"It is me—Mr. Austin," said a voice in the room.

Tom pulled out his match-safe and struck a light. The old gentleman was standing inside the door with his back to it. The boy walked over to him.

"It is you," he said. "I suppose that rascal left the key in the door, and you took advantage of the fact, knowing he had locked me in here."

"Yes," was the reply.

"I read your note, and feeling convinced of its truthfulness, I intended to carry out your instructions the moment I reached Steelville. I will still attend to the matter, for now that you have opened the door I can make my escape."

"You can if you are cautious. The only way you can leave is through the kitchen, and to do that you must wait till Hake and his wife leave the room for good."

"Their name is Hake, then?"

"It is."

"Why not come with me yourself?"

"That will never do. I should be missed, and they would take instant alarm and clear out with everything they could lay their hands on, including my stock, which is in their possession. I want to have them arrested. I intend to prosecute them for their conduct to me. I have been held a prisoner in my room on the floor below for two months. To-day I managed to open the door and get the freedom of the house, but could find no opportunity of leaving the place without being seen and brought back. I was trying to get a window open in a spare room downstairs when you arrived in the storm. I saw you were a bright boy, and I made up my mind to impress you into my service if the chance offered. It did, and now I rely upon you to see me out of my troubles."

"I will do so, Mr. Austin. My name is Thomas Lanston, and I live in New York. I am employed by a large private banker named John Foster, in Wall Street. With a friend I took a bicycle trip out here to-day, and we were riding to Steelville to take a train back when we were overtaken by the storm. We became separated in the darkness, and I took the wrong road at the fork. That's how I happen to be here," explained Tom.

"I am glad to know who you are, my lad, and you won't find me ungrateful for the service I expect of you. Now I must return to my room, leaving you to look after yourself. Take off your shoes and hide down on the ground floor somewhere so as to be able to get away the moment the Hakes come upstairs, as I expect they shortly will."

"One question, Mr. Austin. What do you think their object is in making a prisoner of me? They can't hope to hold me here very long, and they must know that as soon as I get away I am likely to make trouble for them."

"I imagine it has some connection with the stock that the woman showed you. They fear they have made a mistake in displaying it, after what you told them, which I overheard while I was behind the kitchen door. Probably they think that you suspect they do not own the stock, and that you may queer their efforts to sell it. If I am right in my conjecture then their purpose is to detain you in the house until Hake himself can go to New York to-morrow and sell

it. When he gets the money they will let you go and depart themselves, leaving me to get away as best I can," said the old gentleman.

"I guess your surmise is right," said Tom.

He followed the old gentleman out of the room, relocking the door. They crept down to the next floor, where Tom left the owner of the house to return to his room, and kept on himself to the ground floor. He found his way to the rear entry and listened at the keyhole of the kitchen door, but could hear little that passed between Hake and his wife. In the course of half an hour they deserted the kitchen and went upstairs by way of the other entry. As soon as the coast was clear Tom entered the kitchen, unlocked and unbarred the door and stepped out into the night. The weather was clearing up fast. He slipped around to the front of the house, found his wheel where he had left it, and was presently retracing his way to the fork. Reaching the right road, he hurried to Steelville. Tom inquired his way to the hotel and registered. Then he asked to be directed to the home of the president of the Steelville Bank, with whom, he said, he had important business. A boy connected with the hotel was detailed to show him the way. The banker was at home and accorded Tom an interview, the result of which was a visit to the police. The banker and two officers started for the Austin house, while Tom went to the hotel and turned in for the night. In the morning he learned that Hake and his wife were in custody.

After breakfast he took the early train for New York, reaching the bank late. His explanation of the cause was quite satisfactory. During the day he wrote a letter to Mr. Austin, giving his business address, in case the old gentleman wanted to communicate with him. Two days later he got a reply, and learned that Hake and his wife had been committed to Riverhead for trial. Eventually they were tried, convicted and sent to prison. About the middle of June Tom was called before the Grand Jury to testify against Babbitt and Vickers.

An indictment was found and they were duly tried. Their alibis had been investigated and found to be false, and the witnesses were arrested and charged with perjury. The two rascals themselves were found guilty and sent to Sing Sing.

Feeney, though also guilty, escaped because nothing could be proved against him. Tom continued to speculate in the market, and by the first of the year his good luck raised his capital to \$100,000. Notwithstanding his financial importance, Tom worked for some time longer as messenger for the Foster Bank, then he left and went in the speculative business as a regular occupation, and became known in Wall Street as the boy who got rich.

Next week's issue will contain "CONTRACTOR BOB; or, FIGHTING FOR A BIG JOB."

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CURRENT NEWS

"MOONSHINE" KILLED TEETH

The State Law Enactment League has lost its teeth—at least as far as its chief investigator Joseph Jerome is concerned. Joseph's job was that of official sleuth. Of course, he had to taste the drinks before he could swear they were "moonshine."

Soon, he says, his teeth began to loosen from the effects of the "moonshine." Then one by one they dropped out. Such is the potency of San Francisco's "cooking whisky."

Now he wears a set of false teeth. And he has filed a claim for compensation with the State Compensation Insurance Commission. He wants to be paid for the teeth he lost in the good cause.

AN EDUCATED HORSE

D. C. Tucker, a local stock leader, in Danville, Ky., has an educated horse that is worth while. One afternoon Mr. Tucker was driving a drove of cattle up Main Street. At the Post-Office he stopped a few minutes to enter for his mail. When he returned both the cattle and the horse had disappeared. Inquiry brought the information that the cattle had suddenly become panic-stricken and fled with the horse in hot pursuit.

Then Tucker also pursued, with his usual alertness. It was discovered that the horse had outrun the cattle and was bringing them back to the Post-Office in a way that would have almost put Sam Johnson to shame.

Quite a number of very prominent people witnessed this remarkable evidence of superb education exhibited by Tucker's horse. The cattle had got to Maple Avenue before they were finally overtaken.

NEW BULLET PROOF CAR FOR MESSENGER

In an effort to lessen the many hold-ups of bank messengers and clerks who travel from banks to commercial houses and vice versa the Adams Express Company has ordered from the Reo Motor Car Company of New York a fleet of armored body automobiles, mounted on the speed wagon chassis. These were first put in operation in New York.

The body of the wagon has been patterned after an idea by W. M. Barrett, president of the Adams Express Company. The closed body of the car is lined with chrome nickel steel. It is bullet proof and has stood a test of steel jacketed .45 caliber naval type automatic bullets. Not only is the body bullet proof but the wind shield and windows are also made of a composition that bullets cannot penetrate. In the body of the wagon are eight port holes and the guards are equipped with automatic rifles.

Another feature of the car is that though the inside guard is completely isolated from the driver there is a level attachment that gives the guard complete control of the car in case the man at the wheel meets with accident.

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By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XV.

Back Home and Out on the Warpath.

They did turn in for a good rest, and much they needed it, and enjoyed it. The space was much crowded where they were stretched out.

But it was evident that Eli Mountford had his place prepared for the seclusion of secret visitors.

Dan shrewdly guessed that the old man made extra money by his ability to hide officers of the law in this safe concealment, but he made no comment.

Mountford's prediction came true.

Within a few hours the mountaineers had found boats of some description, large enough for them to pontoon the horses across the swollen stream.

They came to Mountford's farmhouse in their search, and, of course, they looked outside and in for any strange horses or visitors.

But all they found was the old fellow's own bony nag and one mule in his barn.

Not a sign of outsiders was in the house.

So Newcastle's henchmen went on, none the wiser.

After a good, long sleep, from which old Mountford did not waken them, they arose strengthened and rested. After the passing of the searchers, Mountford brought up their saddles, harness, and even took their dripping clothes down to the kitchen to dry them out for their onward journey.

They were in a pretty bad plight even at that.

Hatless, with only their shirts, trousers and boots, they were not well equipped for the homeward journey.

So crafty old Eli, who seemed so strangely ready for emergencies, sought around his lockers and drawers, and brought forth some old hats, some rough coats, and outfitted them with some revolvers.

"My father will pay you for all of this," said Dan Dobson, gratefully. "You know they stole every paper I had on me."

"Gosh, I hadn't thought of that!" cried Zachary, worried. "That might cause a lot of trouble with your father's property."

But Dan only laughed.

"All I had with me were duplicate copies, issued as such, at the state offices. You know, they won't do a bit of good to the Newcastles or any one else, for it is the original records which count. On the other hand, Jake Newcastle may try some

trickery, and put himself right in the hands of the authorities."

Jake was already along this very line, believing that the documents which his men had relieved Dan of carrying were the originals.

"I'll give them a lot of trouble, all right. I think I can use these on that Eastern judge, who thinks he knows it all," mused Newcastle the next day, after the report of "no success" had been brought in by most of his men.

He had learned that the judge was stopping at a farmhouse twenty-four miles from his headquarters.

The nerves of the unhappy girl had broken down completely, and the judge had decided to rest on his tiresome journey, so that she might regain her strength.

"Good," said Jake, rubbing his hands, gleefully. "They'll stay there for the next day—that will help me out absolutely."

He became very busy on his plans then, and proceeded to prepare for the entrapping of the Easterner.

"They come out here and think we are a lot of old rubes," said Jake to the old woman, as she brought in his food. "But no man in the country is clever enough to fool Jake Newcastle."

The old lady remembered her own little part in the proceedings, and Dan Dobson's escape through the aid of Tom Dingle and her own quietness.

"Waal, Mister Newcastle, ye're fergettin' the part that woming sometimes play, ain't ye?"

She asked this question ironically, and Newcastle looked up sharply.

"You're kind o' smart to-day," he snarled. "Well, there ain't a woman I've ever seen who couldn't be made a fool of."

Which remark showed very plainly that a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Because, although some women are easy victims of the trickery and lies of men, the majority are not. Newcastle believed that because some of his deceptions had gone smoothly at the start that he would be able to continue smoothly. He called for his best remaining horse—remembering, with fury, that Tom Dingle had appropriated his finest steed.

"I'll go on and get acquainted a little better with Judge Barton," he told his men. "Now, you fellows have a clear field, and I want you to get busy on every still on the place, for I've got some mighty good orders from Louisville and I can clean up a few thousand dollars this week for us all."

He smiled on his men with the expression of a crocodile.

"Boys," he said, as he passed out silver to the crowd of them, "I love you. I'm a hard boss, but I'm working for all of you. I do the brain work, and take the risks, and you are always taken care of good. You may think I'm a hard fellow, but I'm a big rough man, yet I have a heart—I have a heart. Be square with me, boys, and I'll be square with you."

(To be continued)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

WEALTHY INDIAN

Jackson Burnett's title to being the State's wealthiest Indian will soon be disputed. Wilson Clinton, also a full-blood Creek, of Oklahoma, threatens to dethrone him.

A few months ago Clinton, his wife and two children were living humbly in a rough board shack. Then one day oil was struck on his allotment of ground.

Now Clinton has royalties of \$10,000 a month on his oil, with prospects of the amount doubling with the drilling of new wells.

GREATEST INVENTIONS

"The four greatest inventions of an earlier period were all made without the modern aids to scientific discovery, but by men gifted with a disciplined imagination," said Dr. Frederick L. Hoffman of Newark, N. J., Vice President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in his address as Chairman of the Section on Economic and Social Science at the association's Toronto meeting. He went on: "Printing, gunpowder, steam and the compass did more to change the face of the world and the fortunes of mankind than electricity, wireless telegraphy, motion pictures and the graphophone."

"BOTTLED SUNSHINE"

"Bottled Sunshine" or "Helios," as it is labelled in drug stores in Paris, is getting its inventor into trouble with the police. An old man, who put his new product on the market with the claim that it is a cure for tuberculosis and other ills, says he discovered a means of extracting fluid from the sun when as a post-office clerk he accompanied an official mission to Central Africa.

He has no degree, and, as he neglected to state the composition of his medicine on the label, he is accused of violating the law regulating the sale of patent medicines. A magistrate accompanied by a professor from a school of pharmacy instructed to investigate the matter found the inventor living in a shanty outside of Auteuil.

From an iron rod on the roof a number of wires ran into two huge receivers in the courtyard, the whole installation looking like an electric plant. The receivers were filled with a syrup which the old man claimed was extract of sun. He talks seriously about it and says also that he has discovered a method for the transmutation of metals.

NORTHWESTERNERS EATING PEYOTE SEEDS

A new form of intoxication viewed as a social menace among Northwest Indians and Orientals, is the eating of peyote or button-like seeds of an Arizona cactus.

Thousands of these types of Northwest inhabitants are now alleged to be peyote drug fiends, a spree occurring several times a year and lasting many weeks. The effect of the cactus button on its victims is sleeplessness, morbidness and an

increased mental desire for hilarity and games of chance.

The peyote is a pear-shaped species of cactus common in parts of the Southwest. The top bears seeds resembling red-coat buttons. These are sold pickers to dealers for \$2 per thousand.

The button-like seeds are generally eaten in the dry brittle state from five to fifty in a single night.

From time immemorial the peyote has been used in the Southwest among the Aborigines and Mexicans for producing an intoxication of soul and body to aid them in gambling, dancing or ill-timed deeds.

Since the abolition of liquor and the ban on narcotics, the peyote has gradually moved northward along with other vile drugs. The consumption of this bean has invaded the Northwest to Alaska, and many bushels of the peyote buttons have been taken to the Orient.

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A Woman's Nerve

By COL. RALPH FENTON

The following episode in the career of the celebrated Madame Vestris happened in the winter of 1847, when the star of her genius was still in the ascendant, in spite of her fifty years.

She had married the famous Charles Mathews the younger only a short time before, and was visiting Paris in his company.

The chief object of their visit was to secure a ballet troupe for a spectacle, the preparations for which were then in progress at one of the large London theatres at the time under their united management.

But it so chanced that the selection of the ballet fell principally upon Mathews, because his wife was temporarily disabled by an unlucky sprain of the ankle.

She was confined to their hotel in the Rue Sainte Honore, where, of course, she would console herself by giving receptions to her admirers, who were quite as numerous in France as in England.

One evening she was alone in the small but elegant salon adjoining her apartment.

Her waiting-maids were within call, and could now and then hear from one of the further rooms the playful barking of her King Charles spaniels, Flock and Floss, which always accompanied her on her travels.

Taking up a newspaper, her attention became absorbed by the first article on which her glance alighted, for it was upon a subject that excited all Paris for a number of days.

A number of robberies had taken place in quick succession, whose perpetrator had not been discovered.

It was evident, from certain characteristics common to all the crimes, that they were the work of one man.

His favorite, and indeed only method, had been to secreté himself in close proximity to some fashionable and wealthy lady's sleeping apartment, and then to possess himself of her jewels and other valuables after she had fallen asleep. When his victim happened to awake he had not hesitated to use violence to prevent her giving an alarm.

The only clue to the villain as yet lay in the knowledge that he had but two fingers on his left hand, a circumstance that had been noted by one lady who had had the nerve to simulate unconsciousness while secretly observing his felonious operations in the subdued light of her boudoir.

A panic of fear was said to be existing among such ladies as were noted for the number and value of their jewels, and sarcastic comments were passed upon the ineffectiveness of the police authorities.

Madame Vestris was a woman of exceptionally strong nerve, but she could not restrain a little timorous thrill when, having finished the article, she limped across the salon to the door of her

boudoir, intending to summon her maids and retire for the night.

Before entering her boudoir, however, she turned to extinguish the wax lights of a candelabra that had been left burning in addition to the small, shaded lamp by which she had been reading.

The candelabra stood upon a bracket, and cast a strong, mellow light upon the floor, throwing out the shadows of the intervening pieces of furniture, especially of the table at which she had been sitting, in pretty strong relief, inasmuch as the shaded reading lamp in the middle of the table shed its lesser luster in a small, circumscribed circle.

As she cast a final glance over the room, she was suddenly filled with fear on perceiving cast out upon the floor, directly across her footstool, the unmistakable shadow of a man crouching under the table at which she had been sitting.

She remained perfectly quiet, but her terror was increased a hundredfold as she saw, or thought she saw, the image of a hand that possessed only two fingers.

She was convinced that the mysterious criminal, whose deeds had so excited the city, was lying concealed there, and had so lain, probably in contact with the very folds of her dress, the entire evening.

Having come to this conviction, through a swift and dreadful train of reasoning, which every woman understands, Madame Vestris remained for the moment almost petrified.

Her jewels were noted for their splendor and costliness, and she was known to always have them in a casket at her bedside upon retiring; and since her arrival in Paris it had also become pretty well known that she was in the habit of retiring comparatively early, while her husband's duties kept him away from the hotel until a later hour.

Her maids slept at the farther end of an outside corridor, and thus for a considerable time she was virtually alone upon the third floor of the hotel.

Of course, the robber had made himself acquainted with these circumstances, and was waiting his opportunity to enter upon his course of pillage and violence, possibly to end in murder.

These thoughts and conclusions flashed through Madame Vestris' mind with terrible rapidity.

Then, by a tremendous effort of will power, she not only recovered her intrepidity and coolness, but also formed a plan to extricate herself and outwit the villain.

Without extinguishing the lights she began to carol a light operatic air, while resuming her seat, and touched the silver spring bell on the table with which she was in the habit of summoning one or the other of her maids.

This action alone cost her a great pang of fear, for if the spaniels should accompany the maid, they would doubtless at once sniff out the presence of the concealed robber, who might then attack her without delay.

Fortunately, however, the maid who responded to her call was not accompanied by the dogs, which had romped themselves to sleep in one of the remoter apartments.

"Adele!" said Madame Vestris, "is the establishment of M. Vernac, the jeweler, still open, think you?"

"Oh, yes, madame!" replied the maid. "It is Saturday night, when all the shops keep open until twelve, and it is now but a little after ten."

"I shall then have to get you to take a message to him at once," said the actress. "He has been repairing my costliest diamond necklace and my tiara of sapphires and brilliants, which he promised to return this evening. I shall not sleep without having them at my bedside to-night. Whether repaired or not, he shall send them with you by one of the clerks. Bring me the writing materials from my boudoir."

Adele did as she was directed, and, still humming her song, Madame Vestris, with a firm hand, penned the following, which she sealed and directed to M. Vernac, the then fashionable jeweler of the Rue des Italiens:

"MONSIEUR—The two-fingered villain is concealed under the very table at which I write, unsuspecting of my knowledge of his presence. Summon the police, and lose not a moment in hastening to
MADAME VESTRIS."

"There!" said the heroic actress, handing the missive to her servant, "that, I fancy, will bring me back my beloved jewels without an hour's delay, and teach M. Vernac a lesson at the same time. Here is some small change, Adele. Take the first fiacre you find disengaged, and lose no time in returning."

Adele was about quitting the room when her mistress was seized with a sudden horror at the thought of being left alone with the desperado, and she called her back.

"Before you go," said she, with a counterfeited calmness, "tell Marie to come and keep me company. I will see if she has made any improvement in that embroidery work I tried to teach her in London."

"Alas, madame," said Adele, "Marie took the liberty of going to bed an hour ago."

"The lazy little minx!" cried the lady, laughing. "But no matter, I will amuse myself during your absence by rehearsing my part in the new spectacle."

Adele departed, and Madame Vestris was left alone—alone, save for that terrible presence, whom, perchance, an imprudent movement of her foot beneath the table, or even a tell-tale quaver of her voice, might at any instant awaken into a capacity for evil and murderous purpose.

But she had set herself to play a part such as she had never played before, and nobly did she enact it to the very close.

She recited the lines of her forthcoming rôle over and over again; she sang, she trilled, she carolled in a manner that would have ravished the ears of thousands; and all to that single deadly, lurking auditor, whose suppressed breathing she fancied she could sometimes detect between the pauses of her voice, and whom she felt to be within a hand'sbreadth of her trembling limbs.

During all this enforced gayety she was a prey to such secret and mental anguish as can only be imagined by the most sensitive or womanly natures.

The seconds crept by like minutes, the minutes seemed hours, and at last, when she had pretty thoroughly exhausted her voice, she sank back with a sigh and contented herself with humming musically and in a low voice.

Presently, at the end of an hour, though it might well have seemed an eternity to her, her heart gave a great leap as she heard the clatter of wheels in front of the hotel. A moment later Adele entered the room, but with such a demure look upon her face that her mistress at first feared that her message had miscarried.

But Adele was something of an actress herself, and there were those lightly following her up the staircase who brought the assurance of safety and release.

She was almost instantly followed into the salon by three police officers, who were in turn not only followed by M. Vernac, the jeweler, but also by Mr. Mathews, Madame Vestris' husband, who had been picked up at one of the theatres on the way.

As soon as the brave lady saw her husband she uttered an hysterical scream and flew into his arms, with a forgetfulness of her sprained ankle for which she could never afterward account.

At the same instant the officers overturned the table and then quickly pounced upon the concealed ruffian hiding underneath.

He made a desperate resistance, being a powerful ruffian, and armed to the teeth.

But he was overpowered after a short struggle, and led away to prison, after the heroic lady had briefly related her story of the detection of his presence and the stratagem by which she had caught him in the toils.

The criminal turned out to be one Dufresne, a galley slave from Toulon.

He had made himself notorious in the south of France before breaking loose from prison and entering upon the series of crimes which now fortunately led to the conclusion of his career.

He was a hardened and somewhat original wretch, and is known to have remarked to the officers with much nonchalance:

"I ought to forgive the stratagem by which I was ruined. Parbleu! for a whole hour I was the sole auditor of the greatest singer and actress in Europe, who gave herself exceptional trouble to entertain me."

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MAINE PORCUPINES SHIPPED TO ENGLAND

Linwood Flint recently shipped a number of live porcupines to the railroad line at Norway on the first leg of their journey to England. Two horses hauled the vehicle, and the animals were accompanied by forage enough to last them until they reach their destination. There were three barrels of hemlock, apples and potatoes for their use. Mr. Flint says it is several years since he shipped out his first load of "quilled hogs" for English buyers.

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

PIG WITH ELEPHANT HEAD

Forrest Stith of Irvington, Ky., brought in a pig from a litter of eight that had an elephant head and snout and only one eye, which was in the centre of its head; it had no hair. The mother came from the State Fair at Louisville.

SCARCITY OF BEARS

A scarcity of bears and wildcats, on the snouts of which the municipality of Halifax, Canada, pays bounties, is reported. During the year 1921 only \$146 was paid for bounties, while not many years ago it ran up to \$500, and a great many years bears were included. Now the bounties that are paid are chiefly for wildcats.

CROWS KILL OWL

Robert G. Cardwell, who is furnishing data to the Government on bird life in this section, has forwarded a report of the killing of a large barn owl by crows which he witnessed near Lenape, Pa.

The owl had remained out until after daylight and was perched on a tree limb when a number of crows discovered it.

They immediately made a mass attack upon their enemy. One after another darted at the victim until its eyes had been destroyed, after which they attacked it en masse and literally tore its body to pieces.

Owls prey upon crows in the night hours, as they do upon other birds, but usually remain in cavities of trees in daylight.

COUNTS MILLION PEAS

John D. Wainwright of Meddybemps, Me., recently started to count the peas in jars said to contain 1,000,000 of them. If there is exactly that number, Wainwright will have to eat them, but if that figure is one out of the way, Henry Parish must do so.

It started in an argument on Washington's Birthday. Parish offered to bet \$2.50 that he could count 1,000,000 peas in a month, and Wainwright took him up. After he had counted out 100,000, Wainwright suggested that they amend

the wager to read that if the count was incorrect Parish would eat the peas, while Wainwright would do so if it was correct. Parish counted the first 100,000 over again and was filled with nervous dread when he found that he was three peas out of the way. He proceeded with the count with utmost care, and finally announced that it was finished.

Wainwright thoughtfully surveyed row on row of glass fruit jars filled with peas.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said finally. "I'll assume your count is correct and pay you \$2.50 and we'll call it square."

"Not on your life," said Parish. "If we assume my count is correct, you'll not only pay me the \$2.50, but you'll eat those peas, every one of them."

"But how am I to find out whether there are exactly 1,000,000 in those jars?" protested Wainwright.

"By counting them, of course," rejoined Parish shortly.

So Wainwright began his laborous task, which he expects to complete by May 1. Parish announced that he would insist on a recount if Wainwright's tally did not agree with his.

LAUGHS

"Mike, I am going to make you a present of this pig." "Ah, sure; an' 'tis just like you, sor!"

"It did Jack no good to marry his stenographer, for she continued the habit of the office in their home." "How so?" "When he starts to dictate she takes him down."

"Why do they call Washington the city of magnificent distances?" "Because," answered the disappointed office-seeker, "it is such a long way between what you go after and what you get."

Magistrate—What! Do you mean to say your husband struck you, and he a physical wreck? Mrs. Maloney—Yes, your honor; but he's been a physical wreck only since he struck me.

Even the most impulsive women have their good traits. An Irishman, mourning his late wife, tearfully remarked: "Faith, she was a good woman. She always hit me wid de soft ind av the broom."

It was a broiling hot day, and the woman, who came rushing up to the railway station all out of breath, was obviously anxious. "Oh," she exclaimed, excitedly, to the station master, "has the next train gone yet?"

Belle—How silly men are when they propose! Why, my husband acted like a perfect fool. Nell—That's what everybody thought when your engagement was announced.

"What interested me most in my travels," said Henpeck, "was the mummy of a queen I saw in Egypt." "Wonderful, eh?" asked his friend. "Yes, it's wonderful how they could make a woman dry up and stay that way."

FROM ALL POINTS

CHOKED WOLF TO DEATH

There have been instances where wolves have been killed by men without firearms—when wolves have cornered them—but there are few cases where men drive gray wolves into snowdrifts, try to kick them to death and, failing in this, choke them to death.

This, however, happened near Pierre, S. D., when Paul Steffen, a farmer, living about eight miles north of that city, discovered a big gray wolf, killed it in this manner and brought the scalp to the city for bounty.

Steffen was going to Pierre on horseback, and when about four miles north of town a big gray wolf ran in front of his horse. Steffen, mounted, gave chase and ran the animal into a deep snowdrift.

He dismounted and closed with the animal and tried to kick it to death, but was unable to do so. He then took the bridle from his horse and, using the reins, choked the wolf to death. The wolf fought back, but Steffen, being thickly clothed, suffered little from the hand to fang battle, though he carries a few scratches and punctures.

HOW OTTERS LEARN MANNERS

All mothers are very busy people and the otter mother is no exception to the rule. Her first big job is to teach her silky-coated little babies to swim; it is a difficult task, as, strange as it may seem, the baby otters, or cubs, as they are called, do not like the water at all. Up in the big quiet pool, if you are very lucky, you will see the brown mother pushing her babies in, then diving in after them and holding them up with her mouth while they learn to swim. When they have succeeded and can trust the water in which they will spend so much of their life afterwards, the mother shows them how to dive swiftly into a pool where the big fish lie under the rocks, and how to corner the salmon or trout as they turn like a lightning flash when they are being chased. All the lore of the fish pool she teaches them, and, most important of all, the way to nose about in the mud for eels, which are the otter's greatest dainty.

Then, when they have had enough of the water, she drags them ashore and shows them how to eat their food properly. The otter is very dainty in its habits; it eats very slowly and always starts at the head and works toward the tail, which it always leaves. Of course, in the water, if the fish is a small one, the otter will swallow it whole, but if it is a big salmon it has to be dragged ashore and eaten. That is where the mother otter is particular; there is a certain way in which well-bred otters always eat their prey, and if the baby cubs do not do it in the proper manner their mother will heartily cuff them and knock them aside. Greedy otter cubs who eat their fish too quickly have a very bad time with their mothers.

SNAKE BITE CURED WITHOUT RUM

Prohibition does not bother students of the Stanford University summer field work in geology in dealing with rattlesnake bites. They do not rely on whisky, but instead carry in their pockets bottles of potassium permanganate. The story of how Joe Snow, son of the late Prof. Arley B. Show of the Stanford history faculty, and a student member of the Stanford Geological Survey in Ventura county, this summer saved his life has just become generally known on the campus.

Even following the rules laid down by Prof. C. F. Tolman, Jr., head of the expedition, Show had a narrow escape.

The Stanford geology work each summer consists of actual field work in a geological survey. This summer there were eighty-one members in the party which was at work in the wild country in the thousand square miles in Ventura county stretching westward from the ocean north of the Santa Clara Valley.

Each member of the party was required to have with him always a bottle of potassium permanganate and to keep one blade of his knife sharp and oiled as a preventive of rust. In cases of snake bite he was instructed to slask the wound, suck out the blood and then place a couple of crystals of the permanganate in the wound. The men always work in pairs.

Show and his partner, Calton Carson, known as "Kit" Carson of Palo Alto, were working about three miles from the road up Dry Canyon. When Show picked up his lunch from the foot of a tree where he had placed it a rattlesnake struck him twice in the wrist. He used the required remedies at once, but was nevertheless so seriously affected for an hour and a half that Carson did not dare to leave him to go for aid. Show had convulsions and his joints stiffened. After an hour and a half he had improved sufficiently so that Carson was able to leave him to go to the main camp for aid. From there Tom Pamlyn of San Francisco, manager of the camp, and Andrew Mackenzie of Palo Alto, one of the instructing assistants of the survey, went to Show's aid and, partly carrying him and partly helping him to walk, got him over the three mile trail to an automobile, in which he was taken to a physician in Newall. The doctor said that the prompt first aid treatment had undoubtedly saved Show's life and that he was out of danger.

Show was able to return to the work in a week, although his arm was still swollen and his joints were stiff.

The rattler which bit Show escaped into its hole unharmed.

After Show had had his experience there was not a man in the Stanford survey party who did not see to it that he had his permanganate outfit and his clean knife always with him.

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GOOD READING

ALASKA'S OLDEST BEAR IS SLAIN BY INDIAN

What is believed to be Alaska's oldest bear was killed by an Indian hunter recently near Anchorage and the skin and head sent to Seattle, Wash., on the steamship Queen. The animal was also of immense size, the hide measuring 11 feet 1 inch in length. The height of the bear was 6 feet at the shoulder.

The Indian hunter and white men who traded for the pelt estimated the weight of the animal at 1,700 pounds.

The fact that Bruin was toothless and almost clawless leads natives who have inhabited the Anchorage section for generations to believe it is one long hunted. Their forefathers held a grudge against an old bear, because in an early day, more than half a century ago, he was alleged to have cornered and destroyed half the folk in a little sea coast fishing village.

The dead bear was of the Kodiak Island species, which are considered largest of living bears. They are fish eaters largely, but are able to stalk large game. They are the only bears that do not turn and run from man, but advance first to frighten the hunter.

The head and skin is being mounted for the country home of a wealthy salmon merchant.

KEY TO HIDDEN GOLD

The key to \$2,500,000 worth of Spanish gold, hidden in a cache in the wilds of the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas more than 150 years ago by a party of settlers to keep it from falling into the hands of Indians, was reported found.

Anthony Fenninger, who is forming a company in Denver to search for the hidden treasure, said twenty-two years ago the Spanish Government conducted an extended hunt for it, but the search, like others privately made since that time, eventually was dropped.

That he had discovered the key to the charted cache was the assertion of Fenninger. He and a group of prominent Denver business men plan to search for the gold early in the spring.

"I knew nothing of the buried treasure until I went to Eden's Bluff in the White River country on a squirrel hunt last fall," Fenninger declared. "Across the river from the bluff I stumbled over a stone covered with hieroglyphics. I scraped the dirt and moss from the inscription and called the attention of the find to a native. This native told me an extended search for the treasure had been made by the Spanish Government twenty-two years ago."

The settlers were killed by the Indians after the treasure had been hidden, according to Fenninger. A party of native Arkansans is supposed to have unearthed the tunnel to the cache ten years ago, but abandoned the search after one of the members was killed by a landslide.

FLAPPER GHOST

There is a lot of talk going on in Millerton, N. Y., about the flapper ghost which for some time

now has been visiting the home of Theron Snyder at night and peering into a second-story window. Mr. Snyder professes only a nodding acquaintance with the ghost, but says that so far as he has been able to see it through the glass it had bobbed hair and is addicted to the use of eyebrow pencils and lip-sticks. Also it is pretty.

Mr. Snyder is middle aged, the father of a family and an employee of the Central New England Railroad. He takes no stock in ghosts and has no time for them; neither does he take stock in or have time for flappers in the flesh. But the fact remains that almost every night there is a tapping, as of some one gently rapping on the glass of a second-story window, and then through the glass can be dimly seen the head of a flapper, flapping about without much very visible means of support as are shown by the flapper in life.

Every effort has been made to solve the mystery, but to no avail. It has been suggested that perhaps Mary Ellen has come down from Antigonish on a visit, but there are no signs of human footprints on the ground under the window, and nothing to indicate that the flapper climbed up a ladder and peeked into Mr. Snyder's window. Investigations are being made by all the amateur ghost hunters of this vicinity, and it is these investigations that are causing the talk.

Some of these investigators are very young men and they seem to be trying to steal Mr. Snyder's ghost rather than solve the mystery. Two of them are known to have placed a box of bonbons on their window sills at night and lingered hopefully within their rooms, dressed in their Sunday suits, but to no avail. A third put a small bottle of gin on the window sill, but even this did not attract the flapper ghost, which remains true to the household of Mr. Snyder.

Several members of the Snyder family have seen the face with its pert bobbed hair peeking in at the window. They have tried to catch it but have failed. They have not, however, accepted the offer of certain of the young amateur investigators, who volunteer to catch the flapper ghost or die in the attempt. The ghost, so far, has done nothing to the members of the Snyder family but look at them.

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